

It Took More Than a Village: The Story of The 'Ksan Historical Outdoor
Museum and The Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art

by

Chisato Ono Dubreuil
B.A., The Evergreen State College, 1990
M.A., University of Washington, 1995

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Dr. Bill Zuk (Department of Education)
Outside Member

ABSTRACT

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My dissertation analyzes the development of the visual culture of the people known as the Gitksan, as witnessed through the creation of 'Ksan, a tourist village located at present day Gitanmaax (Hazelton, B.C.). I demonstrate how the fields of 'art', 'craft' and 'artifact' come into play in a more nuanced understanding of the development of various sectors at this key tourist site. The focus of the dissertation includes the complex motives that led to the creation of 'Ksan. I consider the interrelationship of its art, the school as well as its business practices. I offer new insights into the developmental advantages of governmental project funding, the selection of a teaching staff knowledgeable in the arts of the Gitksan, and the reasons that led to its dramatic early success, only to be followed by an equally dramatic decline, all in a space of about 40 years. My reliance on interviews and analysis of new documents contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex history at this site. I also examine how the vision of Marius Barbeau may have contributed to the vision for 'Ksan, articulated in part by a non-Native woman, Polly Sargent, a prime mover in the development of the site, the contributions of professionals like art historian Bill Holm, and most importantly, the dedication of the Gitksan people. While the school has closed, 'Ksan's positive impact on First Nations art of the Northwest Coast and its influence on the acceptability of Native art as fine art in Canada and other parts of the world, is evident.

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DEDICATION

In memory of the people below,

Margaret (Polly) Sargent, the driving force of the 'Ksan project.

Doreen Jensen, Gitksan artist and author.

Don Abbott, author and curator emeritus, Royal British Columbia Museum.

Walter Harris, Chief and Gitksan artist.

Freda Diesing, Haida artist and teacher.

Doug Cranmer, Nimpkish artist and teacher.

Bill Ellis, author and owner, Northwest Coast Indian Books.

and my father, Yukio Ono.

INTRODUCTION

The formal education of Native artists in North America is most certainly not a recent development as demonstrated by the amount of exquisite pre-Columbian art that has survived. There is no doubt that there were early master artists, and little doubt that these masters had apprentices. Freda Diesing, Haida artist and teacher, states, “In the traditional culture, a student would serve an apprenticeship under an experienced artist. It would be very strict. Your uncle would teach you his design. You would be doing his work, not your own, while you were working for him. As far as becoming a creative artist from this form of education, it takes at least a couple of years of study ...” (J. K. Marsh, *Ketchikan Daily News*, October 5, 1979). The master/apprentice relationship is, I believe, the purest form of formal education, but it is not for the masses.

It was the Euroamerican that first introduced the classroom style of Native art education in Native schools. Perhaps the most well known of these early efforts were the extensive art programs developed by the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia, from 1878 to 1923, and later, at the Charlisle Indian School from 1906 to 1915 in the United States (Gritton 2000:163). Later in 1957, Alaskan Youth Inc., a private independent art ‘school’¹ for the learning of Native art was opened by Carl Heinmiller in Haines, Alaska. The school would change its name to Alaskan Indian Art Inc. in 1960 (*Alaska Indian Arts, Inc.*, 1967). While there were early Native art courses in some colleges and universities, such as the University of New Mexico (Berlo &

¹ The actual classroom instruction of Northwest art was an occasional enterprise. They were, and continue to be, quite successful at acquiring commissions for large projects such as totem pole restorations or creating new totem poles. In these cases, a master carver would be hired, and as many “artists in training” as needed (Personal communication with Lee Heinmiller, May 25, 2002).

Phillips 1998:223), it would take until 1962 for the establishment of a post-secondary school solely devoted to Native American studio and performing arts, the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA). While there was no formal Native art educational program analogous to IAIA in Canada, like certain Indian boarding schools in America, some Canadian Indian residential schools would occasionally encourage exceptional art students such as Alex Janvier to expand their talents by including fine art training. He was enrolled in the Alberta College of Art program, graduating in 1960 with a diploma in fine art (Ibid., 227). By the mid-1960s, a local movement to counter the terrible economic conditions of the local Gitksan Natives in the Hazelton area in the northern British Columbia started to mature (**figure 1**). There was a proposal by a group of interested persons from the area² that the building of a “replica of ancient Indian village” in which “handicrafts” were to be made by area Natives, and then sold to tourists visiting the Native village (Briefing papers prepared by the Hazelton village council, 1965). To make these “handicrafts” the future artists first had to be trained, and on January 20, 1968, the first classes were held. But it was not until 1970 that the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian art was officially established at ‘Ksan³, Hazelton, in British Columbia (*The Smithers Pictorial*, January 9, 1968) (**figure 2**).

I first became aware of the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art (‘Ksan School) at the ‘Ksan village while a graduate student specializing in Northwest Coast Native art history at the University of Washington. This exposure was very minimal,

² Hazelton is a small community located at the junction of the Bulkley and Skeena Rivers, about 290 kilometers (180 miles), due east of Prince Rupert, BC, whose population was around 400 people in 1960s. However, Gitksan villages cover much large areas include Kisgegas, Kuldo, Kitwancool, Kitwanga, Kitsegukla, Kispiox and Kitanmax (Hazelton).

³ I refer to the ‘Ksan complex as ‘Ksan for this dissertation, which include the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian art as well as the ‘Ksan Indian Village and Museum. Even though it has been 53 years, the school is still referred as “‘Ksan.”

usually nothing more than a paragraph, such as in the chapter on Northwest Coast “Art” by Bill Holm in Volume Seven of *the Handbook of North American Indians* series published by the Smithsonian Institution (Suttles, W., ed., 1990: 630), and a bit more in the catalogue, *The Legacy* (Macnair, Hoover and Neary 1980: 93-95), for the exhibition by the same name.

Later, however, while doing my research for my Master’s thesis, *The Life and Art of Bikky Sunazawa: Contemporary Ainu⁴ Sculptor* (Dubreuil 1995), I found that Bikky Sunazawa (1931-1989) had visited the school while touring the Gitksan territory in 1983, while on a working visit from his Native homeland of Hokkaido, Japan.⁵ Bikky was extremely impressed with the amount of, and respect for, Native art in British Columbia.⁶ Bikky was a giant force, both artistically, and importantly, politically. His influence was far reaching. The thought of there being a school dedicated to learning Native art was almost beyond comprehension. In Japan the creative efforts of the Ainu are not respected as art. Bikky, while having no English language skills, could only talk for a short time to the instructors and students at the school through an interpreter. Nevertheless, inspired by the experience, Bikky knew that he wanted to establish a school for Ainu artists in Hokkaido. He strongly believed that formal training would not only greatly improve the skills of the Ainu artists, but would raise the respect for Ainu art. As an Ainu person, I

⁴ The Ainu are the indigenous people of Japan. The word “Ainu” means “*the* people.”

⁵ Bikky had received a government grant to study the art of indigenous artists from other cultures, and Bikky selected Canada’s Northwest Coast because it was there that wood sculpture was most identifiably First Nations. Bikky met Bill Reid at the beginning of the three-month stay. Reid invited Bikky to work in his studio in Granville Island in Vancouver, and Bikky accepted.

⁶ More information about Bikky’s art, See Chisato Dubreuil, *From The Playground of the Gods: the Life and Art of Bikky Susazawa* (Washington, DC: the Arctic Studies Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 2004).

knew of Bikky. There were very few Ainu, and I respected Bikky. Unfortunately, Bikky died before realizing his dream.⁷ Bikky's thinking about formal studio and classroom art education for indigenous artists forced me to think about the possibilities of such education, and its impact on Native art in general, and as I began to consider dissertation topics, I felt that an in-depth study was necessary to ascertain the impact of the 'Ksan School on the art of the Northwest Coast, and if such a topic was possible for my dissertation.

In discussions with my earlier PhD studies adviser, issues were stressed such as the need for cooperation of key people that would be necessary to present an accurate history of the school, as well as how to deal with the problem of conflicting opinions. The cooperation subject soon became an issue. In an attempt to interview one of the early Native instructors,⁸ he expressed great anger at not being included in a 'book' that was supposed to have been written about the 'Ksan School.⁹ He then asked if other interviews had taken place, and when he was informed of who had been interviewed thus far, he became very agitated saying that because he was the first instructor at the 'Ksan School,¹⁰ he should have been interviewed first. He was reminded that he had not been at

⁷ The Ainu Shinpo (New Ainu Law, 1997) is a new law designed to protect and promote Ainu culture, and has a provision that allows for the creation of traditional art, which could include instruction. However, at this point there is little thought for formal indigenous Ainu art education such as found in North America.

⁸ I decided that due to the respect of his privacy, he should remain anonymous.

⁹ I spent a great amount of energy to find such a book, but no one at 'Ksan had heard of it, nor anyone considered to be an expert of Native Northwest literature. Other 'Ksan authors such as Bill Ellis, who also has perhaps the most extensive inventory of books on the Native Peoples of the Northwest Coast of Canada and Alaska, said he never heard of such a book and that he is in the business to know such things (Personal communication, November 11, 2002). I also initiated an extensive but fruitless Internet search. I do not believe such a book exists.

¹⁰ He must have been misinformed as to his position in the line of instructors. He was the second instructor, starting his teaching on March 16, 1968 (*Smithers Pictorial*, page 6, March 13, 1968). Bill Holm started his teaching on January 20, 1968. "A major portion of the Old 'Ksan program is the training of Indian people in

home for some time. I made repeated calls to his residence at all hours of the day for several weeks with no success. There was no answering machine, or recorded message. I finally found that his brother was living in Victoria, and after a few calls, I found that he had been, and was currently, in Fort Rupert carving a large totem pole for a German customer. I called him immediately, he then angrily said that my inability to contact him was just an excuse, and that he had been interviewed “500 times” and still the truth was not being told. I thought it best to end the interview. I include this kind of information to indicate some of the difficulties I faced to do this research.

While the conversation was a disappointment, and a graphic example of potential “political” problems I might experience again during the research, after great reflection, I decided to continue my research with the expectation that formal Native art education in the Northwest, including its influences, be my PhD dissertation topic. Because of the information I have thus far discovered, I believe more than ever that the subject of formal education, in the Western mode, is extremely important to not only the art history of the Native people of Northwest Coast, but to the future of Native art.

I was determined to push Bikky’s agenda, but as things happen, I found myself working toward art history. The parameters of the ‘Ksan experience are totally unique. While the opening of IAIA was the result of 70 years of evolutionary progress in the field of art education and politics, ‘Ksan started as a business venture. We know the exact motivation, the planning, the development problems, the early successes, sadly, we know about failure. We can see the decline in student numbers and art production, and is no

the arts that are their heritage... Accepted as the world’s foremost authority on this subject, Bill Holm of Seattle will visit Hazelton on January 20th to start the program off” (*Smithers Pictorial*, page I, January 9, 1968).

longer a commercial success as an art as business venture. In February 2010 the school closed its doors. There is no other example in Native art history that offers such specificity on such an important chapter in Native art.

Even though the school was a failure in the long run, I shall prove what was to be a small, local Native tourist art business enterprise, was in fact an important contributing factor to the development of Native art as fine art. For example, I will show that no other art school, Native or non-Native, has created the same national excitement, albeit restricted to perhaps a decade or so, as 'Ksan. I believe this was due in large part to the performance art of the 'Ksan Performing Arts Group. I expect to prove the combination of performing art and studio art was an exciting new approach to promote Native creativity.¹¹ The dancers performed in many of the large metropolitan centers of North America, such as Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Seattle, New York and Washington, D.C., and internationally venues that included Japan, Korea, Germany, and France. Local newspaper accounts followed 'Ksan closely and were always extremely complimentary. As a marketing tool for 'Ksan and their creative efforts, the dancers were unique and exceptionally successful. The dance performance was always coupled with an exhibition venue to sell 'Ksan art.

I believe also that being part of this important chapter in Canadian Native art history will have special significance to those persons who made 'Ksan an unique experience, the organizers, instructors, students, and buyers of 'Ksan art. Another element of significance is that using the 'Ksan experience as a model, we may better understand how unintentional, undirected trends in art develop, such as the changing role

¹¹ There was a gift shop in the main building and an extremely small museum that charge Canadian dollar entrance fee. But, these 'enterprises' did not generate enough profit to pay operating costs.

of Native art politics, and changes in the commercial consumption of Native art, and how and when scholarship reacts to those changes. At the same time I expect to show that the business aspects of the school far exceeded the expectations of the school developers in terms of early artist development, and that managing a burgeoning, very successful business, may have outgrown the management capabilities of the original developers, or their successors.

The efforts of 'Ksan brought exposure of Native art of the Northwest Coast to both a national and international audience, which allowed the more accomplished artists to quickly find new markets for their work. For example, several students banded together to create large works of public art such as three totem poles at the Vancouver Airport, the very large carved murals commissioned by the Royal Bank of Canada (129 feet long and 8 feet high), and the large carved entry doors at the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology. Of course, other artists worked as individuals and gained national and international prominence such as Walter Harris, hereditary chief of the village of Kispiox, Chief Alfred Joseph of the Hagwilget, and Earl Muldon,¹² Ken Mowatt, Venon Stephens, Art Sterritt, Neil Sterritt, Robert Jackson, Ron Sebastian, Doreen Jensen and Freda Diesing.¹³

Methodology

¹² Gitksan artist Earl Muldon whose name has been spelled Muldoe in the past, however, per the request from the artist, I spell Muldon.

¹³ Interestingly, both Doreen Jensen and Freda Diesing were strongly in their denial that they were not students. They both said they often sat in the classes. School records seem to support their assertions. They were employees, but they did dance with the 'Ksan dancers.

Since the mid 1980s social and cultural anthropologists and art historians have emerged with a concern for the politics of representation of First Nations in which Euro-American/ Canadian experts appropriated the art of First Nations as part of their own history of conquest. These critiques have emphasized how such representation has been reinforcing and defining power through knowledge over identities of the Other, and it has created hierarchies of values, judgments, and exclusiveness in the artworld.¹⁴ The crisis of representation and the resulting predicament for contemporary First Nations art have been examined from multiple viewpoints, such as those by anthropologist Townsend-Gault, who states that First Nations art is “not an art category at all, but a shared sociopolitical situation, constituted by a devastating history” (1991:67). Some of today’s leading art historians in the area of North American Native art, such as Aldona Jonaitis, have taken appropriate methodologies of the disciplines of art history and anthropology, as a basis for much of her research. Jonaitis states (2010:6):

In the past, the art historian tended to understand culture solely through its visual manifestations, while the anthropologist attempted to understand art through its broad social and cultural contexts or functions. Art historians were more interested in the stylistic relations between objects, while anthropologists focused on the social relations between people. Today, art historians and anthropologists are no longer such purists, for art history increasingly investigates social, cultural, economic, and political influences on art, while material culture-oriented anthropology places visual objects and images more centrally in its conception of cultural practice. Applied to the totem pole, our different perspectives complement each other and encourage a broader comprehension of the complex topic of totem pole history and meaning.

¹⁴ Philosopher-critic Danto has termed this collective community as “the artworld.” He explains that “To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld” (1964:580). In short, Danto illustrates that art can indeed be anything, but only if it fits an artist(s), art historians, anthropologists, art critics, gallery/museum curators, art dealers and collectors among others, the greater artworld, recognize it as such. In order to constitute a ‘work of art,’ objects are circulated, validated, and legitimated in the artworld.

Furthermore, it is ironic that the traditional methodologies of ethnography in the past, demonstrated by anthropologist Marius Barbeau, would lead to another step toward art history as a discipline. While perhaps best known for his landmark work on Northwest Coast totem poles, he published in a two volume set entitled, *Totem Poles*, which included many photographs, descriptions of the totem poles, and the mythologies related to them (1929; 1950); Barbeau also compiled the first in-depth study of argillite carvings (1953; 1957; 1958). He attempted to identify individual carvers in his book *Haida Carvers in Argillite* (1957), which included master carvers Charles Edenshaw (c. 1839-1920); Charles Gwaytíhl (- 1912); and John Cross (c. 1850- 1939). Barbeau, trying to break through the use of anonymity so prevalent in early anthropological writing, pursued the topic of the Northwest Coast artist as individual, recorded what he could of their biographies, and attributed works of art to artists that had their signature style, a very significant contribution in the evolution of art as art, was an extension of the Boasian method.¹⁵

I propose, given the complexities of the subject of my dissertation, I will use cross-disciplinary methodologies for the research. I will look at these impacts from a number of multiple socio-political and artistic viewpoints. The main focus of my dissertation, the history of Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art ('Ksan school) in Hazelton, British Columbia, had unprecedented support at various government levels. Initially that support was most concerned with the economic well being of the Native, using traditional Native art of the area as the means that would lead to financial

¹⁵ Unfortunately, Barbeau lost much of his credibility by insisting totem poles were a recent phenomenon, post-invasion by the Euroamericans (Barbeau 1930:258-272; Malin 1986:20-22). I believe if he would have stuck to a statement such as the Europeans contributed his place as a major contribution to the history to the Northwest Coast.

independence. The non-Native organization committee, aware of the emergence of a profitable Native American tourist art market, were greatly influenced by the groundbreaking work to establish the IAIA in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the commercial efforts of Carl Heinmiller's Alaska Indian Arts, Inc., in Haines, Alaska, both of which were models for the development of Ksan in some extent. However, my research also revealed that anthropologist Marius Barbeau from the National Museum of Canada, saw the development of plans to create a national park in the Upper Skeena area based on the culture of the Gitksan Tsimshian. This is critical. My research will show that his detailed plan, submitted to the Department of Indian Affairs in 1924, almost certainly became the blueprint for the establishment of 'Ksan thirty years later. To prove this point I reviewed all relevant correspondence between the many levels of government and interview all who participated in the development of the school. I also looked at the extremely important involvement of provincial and federal government entities in the role of art patron, who, making large purchases of 'Ksan art, guaranteed not only the early economic success for the school, and lasting success for some of its students, but insured a legitimate place in the art history of the First Nations people of the Northwest Coast of British Columbia, the country of Canada, and because of the synergistic effect considering the concurrent Native art movement in United States, on the Native art in North America.

The art created by 'Ksan artists is especially important as much of the larger works became public art. As mentioned I examined other public art such as the extensive mural at the Royal Bank of Canada in Vancouver. Much of the monumental art that became public art is two dimensional relief carving, the results of important team efforts by several students. It was this art, to a large degree, that gave impetus to a distinctive

style that became known as the “‘Ksan style,” which also can be seen in individual work, particularly in the creation of ‘Ksan style graphic art. To understand how the ‘Ksan style developed interviews had to be held. [My Human Research Ethics Committee Certificate of Approval Project Number is: 127-02]

I also examined the marginal impact of local tribes, and the major roles of the non-Natives in the development of ‘Ksan, both from the perspective of the Hazelton village administrative staff who developed and implemented the idea, and from the contributions of the non-Native art instructors, most importantly by Bill Holm, the first instructor who faced some of the same problems as the Hazelton village council when he wrote of his landmark analysis of form a [project] of this sort should lean heavily on information from Native artists trained in the tradition that fostered that art.

“Unfortunately, I was unable to locate a qualified informant from the area covered, i.e., the coastal region from Bella Coola to Yakutat Bay” (Holm 1965:vii). The Hazelton village council strongly believed that any art produced by the ‘Ksan School must be “authentic” Indian art. After the exhaustive search for a qualified Native instructor produced negative results, the Hazelton staff turned to Holm for help, the non-Native who was accepted as the world’s foremost authority on the subject (of Native art) (*Smithers Pictorial*, page, 1, January 9, 1968). To get the nuance of the problems encountered, I had to also interview as many of decision makers, Natives and non-Natives, who have the institutional memory to help in the understanding of the actual problems, and of course, I also had to review all relevant correspondence and literature. I also challenged the rationale that led to a revisionist history by some in the artworld, such as those who believed that the main motivation behind the establishment of the school

was the revival and preservation of traditional Native artistic knowledge of the region.

The most important motivation was financial demand.

I also reviewed published newspaper accounts, and other works in the literature to get a sense of professional and public perception of the 'Ksan school, and also followed through published accounts in mainstream art history books by artworld professionals and exhibition catalogues, and commercial galleries, the works of students/ former students. I also interviewed students to ascertain the impact of the 'Ksan School from a viewpoint of their instruction being of cross-tribal artistic styles, on their art. While the cultural area is upper Tsimshian, the instruction came from artists from different tribal cultural backgrounds, such as Robert Davidson (Haida), Chief Doug Cranmer (Kwakwaka'wakw), Chief Tony Hunt (Kwakwaka'wakw), Nathan Jackson (Tlingit) as a dance instructor, non-Native artists, Duane Pasco, although Pasco told me that he was one eighth Osage, and Bill Holm.

Lastly I followed the evolution of the school from the extreme success of the early years, to today's situation where, without government assistance, the school could not be a viable economic or educational enterprise. Ultimately the 'Ksan School closed in February 2010. Again, this required interviews of students, instructors, observers, government administrative staff of various levels, and others of the artworld. From this information I extrapolated the reasons for the schools lack of continued success, at a time when the IAIA in Santa Fe, New Mexico continued to grow. I also deeply examined how the vision of Marius Barbeau has contributed to the vision for 'Ksan, articulated in part by non-Native Polly Sargent,¹⁶ a Hazelton resident and prime mover in the development

¹⁶ Margaret (Polly) Pollete was born in 1913, raised in the Edmonton, Alberta area. She acquired the nickname of Polly at an early age and most people only knew her by that name. She went to the University

of the site, the contributions of professionals like art historian Bill Holm, and most importantly, the dedication of the Gitksan people. While the school has closed, 'Ksan's positive impact on First Nations art of the Northwest Coast and its influence on the acceptability of Native art as fine art in Canada and other parts of the world, is evident. 'Ksan is more than a chapter in the history in Native art of the Northwest Coast, its important contribution to the artistic fabric of Canada must be told.

Literature Reviews

In anticipating the making 'Ksan as my dissertation topic, I have been gathering published and unpublished resource material for many years. I have divided my 'Ksan literature into primary sources include: unpublished material, including correspondence, government committee minutes, government reports,

of British Columbia (UBC), where she majored in History. There she met and married William (Bill) Sargent (Coleman interview July 26, 2003). Bill Sargent was the son of Richard and Emily Sargent, prominent merchants and long time residents of the unincorporated community Hazelton, British Columbia. The community is located near the original site of the Gitksan village of Kitanmax at the confluence of the Upper Skeena and Bulkely Rivers in the middle of the Gitksan Tsimshian Nation. After their marriage in 1941 they moved to Hazelton, and Bill joined the military. During his absence Polly spent much of her time getting to know her neighbors, many of whom were Gitksan. A woman of great intellect, high energy, and a genuine concern and respect for the Gitksan people, she began to organize small community projects such as the Hazelton Library Association (HLA) in 1947. The timing of the beginning of the HLA is extremely important for this study for it was in July 1947 that Barbeau came to Hazelton for the last time. As in the past, he no doubt stayed in the Sargent family home which was located across the street from Polly and Bill Sargent's home. Emily Sargent was Barbeau's first cousin, and the two enjoyed a very close relationship. It is not conceivable that there was not discussion between Polly and Barbeau concerning the Temlaham National Park given Barbeau's fervor for the project, and Polly's intense interest in Gitksan history. For example, she had organized another effort to save the area's totem poles. During the few next years, specific facts of Polly's life in Hazelton are unknown other than the restoration project. And that she was always involved in civic projects. However on April 19, 1956, the *Smithers Interior News* reported that the Hazelton Library Association, established in 1947-48, with Polly Sargent as president, had announced planning for the "building (of) a memorial library/museum as a means of retaining and preserving the treasures of the Indian people of this area as a monument to the districts historic past. It will add to the tourist attractions of the north as whole and give the Hazelton district the opportunity to play its role as a focal point of north central British Columbia" (page 5). This is important! First, because of the remoteness of the Gitksan, there was still a large amount of art in the possession of the Gitksan after the main collection years between 1880 and 1906, and most important to this study, Polly Sargent and her committee were the first to recognize the need for a Native museum to protect the traditional art of all the Tsimshian, Haida and Kwakwaka'wakw.

'Ksan advisory committee minutes, Margaret (Polly) Sargent personal files;

Secondly sources include: 1) academic literature, books, journals, and magazines; 2) brochures and catalogues including early exhibition catalogues featuring 'Ksan art; and 3) newspapers, including early local village, town, city newspapers, including, Smithers, Terrance, Prince Rupert, Vancouver, Victoria, Ottawa, Toronto and Seattle news papers, and art and craft newsletters, Native newsletters, and interviews.

The substantial scholarly literature on 'Ksan was not found in the academic resources. The only direct source of 'Ksan information can be found in Leslie A. Dawn's master's thesis, *'Ksan: Museum, Cultural and Artistic Activity Among The Gitksan Indians of the Upper Skeena, 1920-1973*, which was done at the University of Victoria, 1981. First, Dawn states that the formation of 'Ksan was a part of the developments in folk and the open-air museum concept from Europe. He states (1981:10):

The transformation in form and practice from the traditional ethnographic museum to 'Ksan was part of the gradual evolution of museumological concepts in the past one hundred years. The preliminary expansion of these ideas occurred in northern Europe with the establishment of the "folk," and what was know as the "out-of-door" museum in the late 1800s. This genre of museum developed in parallel fashions at various locations, in each responding to the unique aspects of the region and its specific subject matter. The application of these ideas to the indigenous cultures of the northwest coast developed in the period from 1900 to 1973 in centres from Alaska to Vancouver, and eventually culminated in 'Ksan.

I do not believe Dawn's assumption of 'Ksan was a part of the evolution of the folk and open-air museum concept from Europe. 'Ksan was created a business venture to solve the economic and unemployment problem of the area at that time, and the 'Ksan museum facility were based on the reconstruction of the old Gitksan Native village. Dawn's acceptance of the 'metanarrative' of the story reminds one of Gerald

McMaster's¹⁷ statement referring to the distinction of the dichotomous boundaries of "history" and History" in the Thomas McEvilley's *Art and Otherness: Crisis in Cultural Identity* (1992). McMaster states:

What he [McEvilley] calls into question is a Eurocentric History (upper case), whose dominant intellectual space is now coming into contact with, and being perforated by, other histories (lower case), especially by those which do not count Europe as part of their lineage (1999:81-2).

McMaster has assumed that the art history of the dominant West is the only history, while history narratives of the Other are excluded, rarely acknowledged or make light of.¹⁸ I suggest that Dawn should have focused on specific local contexts as well as the diversity of 'Ksan experience.

Secondly, lacking in Dawn's thesis was, as I previously made the point, written as a 'single voice,' which he spoke as an art historian and as an observer. Because he did not include the voices of actual participants from multiple levels such as the people from the Gitksan community, Gitksan artists and performing group members, non-Native participants, etc., he dismissed the importance of the inside voices as 'micro-narratives.' For example, he indicates that 'Ksan was an altruistic response to an emerging post-war economy that would revive traditional cultures on the Upper Skeena (Dawn 1981:58-86). I strongly disagree, and argue

¹⁷ Gerald McMaster is curator of Canadian Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. He is a Plains Cree from Red Pheasant, Saskatchewan, and first studied Fine Art at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. McMaster attained his MA in Anthropology from Carleton University, and a PhD from the University of Amsterdam's School for Cultural Analysis.

¹⁸ McMaster implies that the notion of history/History to (upper case) as a discipline of the Western Art History to be a 'mainstream' as a linear line of a progress development. He makes the point that "although the Western discourse attendant on these power relations has never acknowledged coexistent visual histories, their multiple histories extend back for at least five centuries" (1999:83), and he further describes that "Not only is there is no singular canon, but now there are many micro-narratives about art" (Ibid., 85).

that 'Ksan was the result of one woman's life's work – Polly Sargent – and the Gitksan community. Polly believed that the only way to revive the employment situation in Hazelton was through tourism. Her world did not include a “big picture element” beyond the “selling” of 'Ksan. Furthermore, Dawn also states that “... no attempt was made to gain access to the internal records at 'Ksan or in the possession of Mrs. Margaret (Polly) Sargent” (Ibid., 4). Again, this misses various nuances and the core of the 'story' of the development of the 'Ksan on his thesis.

Finally, Dawn's thesis was focused on the time period from 1920 to 1973 on the Gitksan Natives and their artistic activities. 'Ksan was officially opened on August 12, 1970, and they got a great deal of publicity and some of 'Ksan artists became very successful in the art market. It was the peak and the rise of the 'Ksan development that Dawn focused on for his thesis, however, since then 'Ksan has had many problems; what happened after the rise of 'Ksan and why and how the decline occurred would be crucial points to examine and address for the evolution of 'Ksan.

Chapter Synopses

Chapter One looks at the roots of Gitksan Native art in the area. Native people—whether Ainu, Canadian First Nations, or Native American—often begin their narratives with “long, long ago, ...” and the Gitksan are no different. When the average Gitksan member, not those who I interviewed, discovered that the reason for my being in Gitksan country was to study 'Ksan, they wanted me to tell the world that they did not see Gitksan art beginning at a certain time period. They, and we,

believe that Native art has always been slowly evolving through education from the beginning of time. Sterritt et al. describes:

The *adaawk* (oral histories) describe the ancient migrations of the house, its acquisition and defense of its territory, and major events in the life of the house, such as natural disasters, epidemics, war, the arrival of new peoples, the establishment of trade alliances, and major shifts in power ... The *ayuuks*, or crests, depicted on poles and on ceremonial regalia also arise out of events in the history of the house as described in the *adaawk*” (Sterritt, et al. 1998:12).

Curators Jay Stewart and Peter Macnair give this example using Emily Carr’s painting in the exhibition entitled *To The Totem Forests: Emily Carr and Contemporaries Interpret Coastal Villages* (**figure 3**) (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria 1999:29):

According to Barbeau (1929:105), the *ayuuks* shown on the pole to the extreme right of Carr’s painting are, from top to bottom: *Rafters* of the House, depicted by the cross-hatched cylinder; *Split Person*; *Weneel*, a mythical long-nosed bird; *Three Human Beings* standing shoulder to shoulder with groundhogs under their arms; *The Ladder*; depicted by parallel rows of notches.

They further state, “The pole honours a Chief named Weegyot and records highlights from his mythic and real history, which, from the Gitksan point of views, is a continuum” (Ibid.).

Traditional Northwest Coast art today is identified as formline design, but long time ago, Native people had no word for art—it simply fit our spiritual and esthetical beliefs. It was what Native people did, but “it” was always defined through education beyond the apprenticeships.

So it was out of respect for Tsimshian Gitksan spiritual, esthetical beliefs of the elders, that I began this narrative. It is my hope that by starting at the beginning

that all people who read this dissertation have an understanding how slowly the art of the native people of the Canadian (and Alaskan) Northwest Coast art evolved: how the field of professional artists came into being. Included in this chapter is a brief description of my research into the petroglyphs of Vancouver Island and southern Alaska showing the prehistoric formline art forms. Organized art education has been an old and honored process for eons. It is one of the goals of this study that the reader understand that the earliest process of educating artists from the pre-history artistic era to the student artist of the Kitanmax School, although complex, was logical. To this end, I evaluate our current understanding of the known and possible educational processes available for the artists in this tradition to situate the work of the artists within the development of Native art in northwest Canada, and to prepare the reader for the extended discussion in the later chapters.

Chapter two discusses the transition that took place in the late 1700s, when the Northwest Coast of North America was overrun by the Europeans, changing forever the economic and the traditional culture of the indigenous population. By the mid-1800s, Christian conservatives were relentlessly attacking the Native culture, especially the potlatch, the spiritual, social and economic bedrock of Northwest Native culture and its most important symbols, the totem poles. I also examine the increasing importance of totem poles in relation to the Canadian tourist movement, which began slowly in the 1880s, mostly through efforts of the anthropologist Marius C. Barbeau and the Canadian National Railway (CNR). I indicate how CNR used the indigenous Northwest Coast peoples in an attempt to increase profits as part of a process of cultural appropriation, in much the same way

that the Santa Fe Railway used the Native culture in America's Southwest.¹⁹

However, the Canadian efforts were not nearly as successful promoting Northwest Coast tribal culture: their main goal was to improve their financial situation failed completely.

I especially note the unsuccessful efforts of Marius C. Barbeau to establish the National Park of Temeahm. This chapter suggests not only that the plans for this work may have been the blueprint for 'Ksan, but also Barbeau's lasting contributions: he brought the Gitksan totem pole culture to national and international prominence, introducing their legends and lore, especially the Gitksan origin myths surrounding Temeahm, to the Canadian consciousness and beyond. By the 1880s the Christian conservatives forced through a law banning the potlatch, a law that had a devastating effect on traditional art, especially the totem pole. Much of the artistic symbolism that had so enriched traditional art was lost forever.

In chapter three, I examine the importance of the restoration of the totem poles in the Gitksan territory that was financed by the CNR and the Canadian government from 1925 to 1930, as well the growing anthropological interest in the poles by Barbeau from the 1920s to the 1950s. I discussed about the exhibition, *Canadian West Coast Art – Native and Modern* (1927), which Marius Barbeau was dedicated to find support for the exhibition, promoted interest in Northwest Coast

¹⁹ Beginning in the early 1880s, the Santa Fe Railway began using Native American imagery from the Southwest tribes. The extremely successful advertising campaign brought many thousands of passengers to use the Santa Fe Railway. The appropriation of nearly all things Natives included the Pueblos art, especially sandpainting designs, using the image of Native American chiefs and "cartoon" Native children in graphic art, and Native Americans as models in serious art. The Santa Fe Railway stockholders made a great deal of money through this appropriation, but so too did the Natives through their art. The Santa Fe Indian Market is the home of the world's largest Native art event.

art, especially the art of Gitksan. I also discussed about the terminology shift of the definition of “art” and “craft” in this chapter.

I also look at the beginning of local Gitksan non-Native interest in the traditional Native Gitksan culture, particularly the creation of the Skeena Treasure House (STH)/Library in Hazelton, but also at the early initiatives of Polly Sargent, who was elected Hazelton’s first mayor in 1956. It must be noted that Sargent did set out to make a model for ‘Ksan, and by the early 1960 Sargent became President of the ‘Ksan Association. In business, as in many cultural events, timing is critical. The B. C. Centennial brought crucial funding to this project.

Chapter four focuses on the subsequent phase of Sargent’s work in this community. She was the driving force that made ‘Ksan more than a community project with the sole aim to fill the financial demands for the community through employment. I will show that Sargent was able to bring an ongoing source of funding through government grants to the community, as well as attracting the expertise of master Northwest Coast artists and art historians in all area, such as non-Native Bill Holm, who was instrumental to the formation of the Kitanmax School beginning in 1968 and was the school’s first teacher.²⁰ In this chapter we will see that the period of 1965 to 1970, and the formative years of the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art was a combination of audacity, naïveté, and determination.

²⁰ Holm is currently professor emeritus of Northwest Coast First Nations art history and culture at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, and a leading authority of indigenous art of the area. Holm wrote many books and is an accomplished painter and wood carver of Northwest Coast traditional style artwork. He is also accomplished at Plains Native style bead works. For more information on him, see www.burkemuseum.org/bhc/

Chapter five documents the rapid growth of the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art, which the Canadian government designated as a 'trade school' *rather* than an art school. I discuss the success of 'Ksan, especially the effect of the 'Ksan performing art, and then later the problems with the school, the decline of the school's importance due to the declining health of Sargent and her subsequent retirement from 'Ksan. Finally, I will discuss the reasons for closure of the school in 2010.

My study also indicates that 'Ksan had many problems; constant fiscal problems, some minor troubled relations with the village and its inhabitants, and sporadic in-fighting between the school instructors and Sargent over her occasional autocratic management style. I highlight the work of Bill Holm, first instructor of the school, so that we might better understand the formline system, now part of the iconic identity of visual culture throughout the Northwest Coast. Indeed, as I discuss here, from an art historical point of view, there was and is the problem of the deviation from traditional two-dimensional formline design rules—a deviation that became known as the 'Ksan style of art by both traditional Northwest Coast artists and art collectors. This raises the question: Was 'Ksan's creativity really art, or was it craft?

As part of a broader socio-historic and economic frame, it was also important to remind readers briefly of the well-known historical impacts of the missionaries and the resistance to the conversion processes; the introduction of deadly diseases; and the initial oppression by the government (i.e., the 1884 potlatch laws). I remind the reader that all this led over time to a loss of traditional artistic knowledge—not

just for the Gitksan community, but also for virtually all Native communities within the Northwest Pacific regions of Canada.

Later, in 1951, Canada's government realized the tremendous miscarriage of justice in their treatment of the Northwest Coast Native people. First, it repealed the potlatch law, and then, through federal, provincial, and local agencies, they became patrons of Canadian Native art by issuing grants for the tourist village of 'Ksan, which led to the specific development of Gitksan art at 'Ksan. The reader must realize however, that governmental funding did not come easily to the First Nations of coastal Canada in general, and this caused problems specifically for the Gitksan. For example, by designating 'Ksan as a trade school, and not an art school, the government assumed that the "end products" of the school were craft, not art. In spite of this, the school quickly attained a positive image. I argue that even though there was a degree of mismanagement in later years—especially at the school, not 'Ksan village—the school, especially in its early years, did produce some fine artists. These artists effected a positive change in the perception of Native art throughout Canada, but especially with regard to Northwest Coast art. The art from the Kitanmax School of Northwest Indian Art disseminated throughout eastern Canada, first in 1972 when the National Museum of Man (today's Canadian Museum of Civilization) brought the 'Ksan dancers and artists and their art to the museum for several performances, and then later in the 1970s and early 1980s, when David Wright, owner of the Snow Goose Gallery began to offer 'Ksan art for sale. More than any other Native art style of Canada, 'Ksan helped established indigenous art as fine art.

Except for chapter one, which deals with an essential summation of pre-historical issues and debates, all chapters include reviews of the literature, correspondence from various scholars, and interviews with Gitksan elders and artists. Especially important to the research was my complete access to the official and personal files of Polly Sargent and the files of the village of 'Ksan, including the minutes of meetings of the many committees. Also included are files from the Royal British Columbia Museum and other museums, such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Glenbow Museum, and Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

The tourist village of 'Ksan, the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art, and the Dance Group have all had a part in moving Northwest Coast Native art to place among and equal to Canadian art, and I feel privileged to tell its story.

The “Formline” Design System

Due to the predicament of traditional life of the First Nations Northwest Coast, the understanding of conventions of northern two-dimensional design system was nearly lost in the late 19th century. After Franz Boas's initial analysis of the Northwest Coast design system in the late 19th century, many scholars tried unsuccessfully to go beyond Boas's advisement and investigation. Even Boas himself struggled to codify the principle design system of the Northwest Coast art throughout his career. Anthropologist Peter Macnair states that, “It is evident that, while Boas was struggling to comprehend the art at its greatest intellectual abstraction, he was unable to elicit clear information on meaning because he had not fully mastered an understanding of form” (Macnair, Hoover and Neary 1980:68).

Though Boas outlined some principles of coastal design in his *Primitive Art* (1927), this approach was not well realized until Bill Holm, the distinguished authority on Northwest Coast art, developed his theory that the basis of almost all traditional Northwest Coast Indian art lies within the formline system, which he published in the most influential of his many books, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* (1965)²¹ (**figure 4**). Holm notes (1965:8) that “the northern Northwest Coast Indian artists had a highly developed system of art principles that guided their creative activity and went far beyond the system of conventional animal representation described in the literature, most notably in the works of Franz Boas.” This book reveals a defined vocabulary of the northern two-dimensional design system that had been practiced by northern Northwest Coast artists for centuries. With his insight we began to understand the complexity of the design system. Holm defined the formline system as, “the characteristic swelling and diminishing linelike figure delineating design units. The formlines merge and divide to make a continuous flowing grid over the whole decorated area, establishing the principle forms of the designs” (Ibid:29). Holm also coined names for design elements such as “ovals,” “u-forms,” “split-u forms” as a vocabulary²² in order to be able to analyze this complex design system.

²¹ While this book is a challenge to read, the book is the third highest selling book in the history of the publisher, the University of Washington Press, and has never been out of print since its first publication in 1965. As an indication of its importance, it has been included as one of 133 *Great Canadian Books of The Century* “that shaped a nation,” edited by Pollak, Usukawa, and Kenward (1999). In a review of the book in the *Beaver*, a Canadian magazine, the reviewer states that the most distinguished feature was Holm’s sensitive yet scientific approach to the art that often have been considered intangible.

²² Holm states (1965:vii), concerning his reconstruction: “Ideally, a study of this sort should lean heavily on information from Indian artists trained in the tradition that fostered the art.

Holm's analysis methodology focuses on principles of composition, design organization, and form, "those stylistic characteristics of Northwest Coast Indian art which have heretofore escaped analysis" (1965:13). Anthropologist Michael Ames makes the strong point of the 'discovery' of the formline design system [as found in Boas's and Holm's books] (1981:4) stating that: "The codification of design elements has encouraged a standardization or rationalization of design and technique. The consequences are comparable to those that occur when customary law is transformed into written law: a general stereotyping of form and content." He continues to say (1981:6) that: "The codification produced by Boas and Holm provide the primary criteria by which the Northwest Coast artist is judged."²³ Holm's vocabulary of the formline system made a great impact on, and brought a shift to, the field of the Northwest Coast art, making it possible to identify the signature styles of some individual artists such as his work on individual artists such as Charles Edenshaw (1839-1920) and Willie Seaweed (1873-1967), focusing on innovation and historical development. Ames describes Holm's approach on Willie Seaweed (1992:75):

[Holm] talks about his [Seaweed's] control of line, proportion, scale, and balance; his intellectual approach and 'passion for perfection'; his outstanding craft; his adoption of new techniques when they facilitated his work; the 'power' of his creations; the evolution of his style; and his

Unfortunately, I was unable to locate a qualified informant from the area covered, i.e., the coastal region from Bella Coola to Yakutat Bay. That there may be some still living is not questioned but contemporary work seen from the area reveals a lack of understanding by Indian craftsmen of the principles that are the subject of this study." Therefore, while some terms of his books are derived from Boas's terminology, some are solely Holm's invention.

²³ While Holm's contribution was of tremendous value in understanding traditional Northwest Coast art, I believe that the many accolades, well earned, caused many artists to believe that the book is the 'Bible' of Northwest Coast art, and older artists may be intimidating younger artists from developing new traditions, and/or younger artists believe that the analyses are 'rules,' not to be broken.

reputation among the Kwakwaka'wakw²⁴, museums, and collectors as a great carver within a recognized genre. Holm also describes the cultural and littoral setting of Seaweed's work. Almost everything he made, except for some miniature totem poles for sale to whites, was for use in the Kwak'wala social gatherings, political manoeuvrings, ceremonial displays, and economic exchanges anthropologists call the potlatch. It is evident from Holm's analysis that Seaweed's work, as all good art must be, is both deeply embedded in a complex cultural ecological system and transcends it. Good work can be viewed both ways, singularly as artefact-in-context or as art-standing-by-itself, and binocularly as a creative work possessing both local history and comparative significance.

Holm's scholarly contribution identified more signatures styles of individual Northwest Coast artists (1974a; 1981; 1983b), and he also identified Native artistic styles of the many humanoid faces found in the characteristic imagery of Northwest Coast masks (1972) and regional stylistic differences of Northwest Coast art (1983c; 1990). Further, some of Holm's students, such as art historian Robin Wright, followed his stylistic and historical methodology in a quest to identify carving styles of anonymous Haida argillite artists of the 19th century (Wright 1983; 1987; 2001), and artist and art historian Steve Brown's work to identify anonymous Tlingit carvers (1987). Later, the important exhibition *The Legacy: Tradition and Innovation in Northwest Coast Indian Art*²⁵ and its catalogue (1980) highlighted the

²⁴ The Kwakwaka wakw is a group of Northwest Coast peoples who speak the Kwakala language, which is classified as Wakashan. It is the name by which these bands refer to themselves, although in traditional anthropology they are incorrectly called Southern Kwakiutl. The name Kwakwaka wakw translates literally as kwakwala speaking peoples (Brown 2000:205).

²⁵ The exhibition *The Legacy* opened in Victoria at the British Columbia Provincial Museum in August 1971, remaining open through December 1972, and was funded by a grant from the British Columbia Government's First Citizens Fund. The exhibition was so popular that a second exhibition opened from 1975 to 1977 in cities across Canada, and was funded by the Associate Museums Programme of the National Museums of Canada (1980:9).

development of Northwest Coast art over time, which, based on Holm's analysis, helped to articulate traditional styles, including the tracking of changes among different individuals and groups, making contemporary innovation immediately recognizable.

Tsimshian Sculptural Style

The Tsimshian has lived in northwestern British Columbia along the Nass and Skeena rivers and on the inlets and islands between their sounds. They comprise four major divisions: the Nisga'a, on the Nass River; the Gitksan, on the Upper Skeena; the Coast Tsimshian, on the lower reaches of the Skeena; and the Southern Tsimshian, on the coast and islands to the south (Halpin and Suguin 1990:267). Even though artists of these regions live lived hundred of miles from each other, both groups of artists seem to have followed the same formline design principles since pre-contact time.

I will use the unpublished stylistic analysis, "Some Tentative Thoughts on Tribal Form Characteristics of Humanoid Faces in Northwest Coast Sculpture" by Bill Holm (n.d.) to demonstrate the distinctive sculptural style of the Tsimshian **(figure 5)**.²⁶ Holm refers to the principle form of Tsimshian masks and frontlets are half cylinder. He further describes the detailed characteristic in the following: forehead slopes back from brow; front and side planes apparent; brow arched, narrow with rounded ends; eyesocket area large and open; orb large and smooth; more deeply set at bottom; eyelids carved, edges lack defining line; smooth dip

²⁶ This stylistic analysis was later published in the exhibition catalogue, *American Indian Art; Form and Tradition* (Walker Art Center 1972:76-83).

between brow and bridge of nose; nose often with curved silhouette, somewhat aquiline; nostrils fairly wide, flaring; upper cheek, forecheek and cheek planes intersect in cheek pyramid; mouth wide, lips narrow; chin forward, short from top to bottom. In summary he makes five points of the main identifying Tsimshian characteristics as open expression; firm, “skeletal” structure; cheek pyramid; unlined eyelids; wide mouth; narrow lips.

The earliest Tsimshian stylistic analysis was done by Paul S. Wingert in *Tsimshian Sculpture* (1951). Although this attempt was based on careful observation of a few specific Tsimshian masks, Wingert’s stylistic analysis tended to be more of a general treatment of the art and form of the Northwest Coast as a whole, without emphasis on a distinctive regional style. However, some of his observations on the Tsimshian mask are well described. He stated, “These masks often evidence a remarkable expression of naturalistic bony structure and fleshy form. The orbital, jaw, and cheekbones are, for example, usually rendered with marked sensitivity. There is also a strong expression of fleshy forms and tightly drawn surface skin over these bony structures” (1951:88). This “fleshy form” is demonstrated on a Tsimshian frontlet (**figure 6**). It shows the effect of smoothness approaching living skin due to a finely finish treatment of the surface of the carving.

Another example of the characteristic “naturalistic bony structure” is the so-called “cheek pyramid” described by Holm. When you look at the Tsimshian moon mask (**figure 7**), the strong defined contour of the cheekbone structure is eminent due to the intersection point among upper cheek, fore cheek, and cheek planes. Other characteristic details of Tsimshian style masks are the large and rounded orb

(eye) and the eyelids, without a defining line, which gives a “surprised wide-eye expression” (**figure 7**).

The sculptural style of Tsimshian totem poles appears to follow the same principle. When comparing the diagram of the face of the totem pole (**figure 8**), we see similar characteristics: short chin; smoothly rounded orb; aquiline nose; and the similarly pronounced cheek like the mask previously mentioned. There are, however, some differences in the facial structure found on totem poles. The nostrils found on a totem pole are defined and widened, and the narrow lips are drawn back around the cylindrical shape of the pole, which is much more exaggerated than on a mask. In spite of these minor differences, when looking at historical photographs of totem poles (**figure 9**), we see the same principles of Tsimshian mask sculptural forms. The anatomical structure of human or humanoid figures found on Tsimshian totem poles have more naturalistic proportions more than Haida or Tlingit poles, for example, the Tsimshian arms and legs are more lifelike in their roundness (**figure 10**). Tsimshian totem pole figures are usually depicted in a standing position with slightly bent knees.

One of the most characteristic differences setting apart totem pole styles of other cultures, is that each figure of a Tsimshian pole are distinctively separated from each other, not like the interconnecting figures found on Haida poles (**figure 11**). However, the most characteristic signature style found on many Tsimshian poles are the multiple small figures or human faces (**figure 12**). They often separate the main figures or are on the top of the pole. Boas called them the “mermaid children” (1916:28), but they later were identified as celestial

phenomena and mythological creatures acting as crests (Halpin 1984: MacDonald 1984). These small figures or small faces also form borders around frontlets (**figure 5**) and housefront paintings (**figure 13**).

These are the general stylistic forms of Tsimshian sculpture. Of course, there are always some exceptions to the style such as found on shamanic art, or influences from the other Native styles. I use the terms such as 'Gitksan art,' or 'Gitksan style' throughout this research because Gitksan artists and the Hazelton community refer it as 'Gitksan art,' respectfully. I honor that term, but the Tsimshian, Gitksan and Nisga'a people were/are collectively called the Tsimshian. Simply put, the Gitksan style is a synonym of the Tsimshian style.

CHAPTER 1: EARLY NATIVE ART: FORMLINE AND PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS (PRE-CONTACT-2000) ON THE SKEENA RIVER'S NORTHERN NORTHWEST COAST

In this chapter I discuss the state of artistic creativity, specifically the carving arts, of the two major tribes on the Northwest Coast of the Upper Skeena River²⁷—the Coast Tsimshian and, especially, the Gitksan Tsimshian—from pre-contact to 2010. Later in my study I will analyze the change in the graphic formline design that occurred at the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art at the 'Ksan tourist village beginning in 1968. Here, I offer essential introductory remarks on the historical and cultural milieu influencing the emergence of a modified formline style. Franz Boas wrote of the study of Northwest Coast art: “The only means that will set us free (in our thinking) is to sink into a new life, into an understanding of a thought, of a feeling, of a form of behavior that has not grown from the soil of our (European) civilization, but rather has had its sources in another cultural tradition” (Goldman 1975:9).

When the first known Europeans reached the Northwest Coast shores of North America, they were surprised to find so many Native cultures with their own language, customs, and art. In 1791, French explorer Etienne Merchant wrote, “[W]hat must astonish most is to see painting everywhere, everywhere sculpture,

²⁷ Information on all the tribes of the Northern Northwest Coast, but especially the Gitksan is sporadic due to their remote location on the Upper Skeena River. There are many instances in this study that other areas of the Coast Tsimshian, or even other Northern Northwest Coast tribes, the Haida and Tlingit, are used for illustrative purposes. Modern day Gitksan villages include Kisgegas, Kuldo, Kitwancool, Kitwanga, Kitsegukla, Kispiox and Kitanmax (Hazelton) (Halpin and Seguin 1990:269). It must be noted that the spellings of these villages differ widely in the literature. This study does not include the Nisga'a people.

among a nation of hunters” (Baker 1990:9). What the Europeans did not comprehend was that this art was a major component of a very complex social system, which included an established art market and trained professional artists who possibly acquired their knowledge in a “school”²⁸ environment rather than solely from apprenticeships. Their artistic creations were based on a set of rules that were followed throughout the northern Northwest Coast. In contrast to Merchant’s comments, many Europeans viewed the art and culture of the coastal Indigenous peoples as primitive. Despite this, Native art soon became popular, and the artists responded to new European market possibilities as early as the 1820s.

Unfortunately, the very presence of the Europeans had a dramatically negative impact on the Native culture. The introduction of diseases meant the loss of many thousands of Native people, no doubt including a number of master artists, the keepers of artistic knowledge. Additionally, by the mid-1800s European clergy and lay-clergy had begun the conversion of the Native peoples to Christianity, which included ordaining a small but important number of Tsimshian people. The potlatch law of 1884 as well had profound effects. While much is written about the law and Native resistance to it, what is not so well known is the number of Christian Natives, especially among the Gitksan, who strongly supported it. This combination of disease, religion, and law changed the art and cultures of the Northwest Coast in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries.

²⁸ The word “school” in this context is not to be thought of in the Western sense, but as a pre-contact organized educational effort to learn the formline arts of the Northern Northwest Coast.

The art of the Southern and Northern Northwest Coast²⁹ had been evolving for thousands of years, as evidenced by the 4000-to-5000-year-old “scoop spoons” (Ames and Maschner 1999:228) or “feeding spoons” (Dubreuil 2003:73)³⁰ found at the Dert-s site on Pender Island, located off the southeast coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, in Coast Salish territory. Ames and Masher based their findings on information suggested in Bill Holm's book *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* (1965). They placed the spoons in “the Northwest Coast idiom,” believing that an idiom is an artistic form of expression “rather than just a style” (Ames and Maschner 1999:221).

The Northwest Coast formline, or idiom, represents a set of aesthetic “principles” that, regardless of subject matter or medium, creates distinctive negative and positive space that makes up the Northern style art.³¹ The formline expression is so characteristic that it can be used for diagnostic purposes in the dating of objects.³² While the feeding spoons are examples of sophisticated art, the

²⁹ While there is some overlap at the geographical margins, the stylistic differences between northern Northwest Coast art and that of the southern region of the coast (which includes the Coast Salish, Makah, Nuu-chah-nulth and Chinookan people) are dramatic. In pre-contact times, the southern tribes had no totem poles. Their monumental art was indoors, mainly house posts, which differed from Northern house posts and the totem poles in that they were designed with recognized iconography to be “read” by the public.

³⁰ Strikingly similar feeding spoons from the Jomon culture have been found at several sites in Hokkaido, Japan. These spoons have been dated to approximately 2000 years ago. Given the fact that the Pender Island spoons are perhaps 3000 years older than the Jomon spoons, we can ask whether the spoons were the result of parallel development with a time offset, or the Jomon were directly influenced by artists from the Northwest Coast. Tlingit oral histories suggest there were both a western flow and an eastern flow of information (Dubreuil 2003:73).

³¹ In relief carving, the negative space is removed; in two-dimensional painting on wood, the rules are less specific. But regardless of medium the system is complex, consisting of different elements (the formline, ovoids of many shapes, eyelids, U-forms, tertiary units, “S” forms, and hatching). When painting is involved, the negative spaces were usually painted green, blue-green, or blue (Holm 1965).

formal elements of the formline design system seems to have begun no later than 500 to 700 BC (Holm 1990:603), and perhaps as early as 1500 BC as suggested by George MacDonald (1983:101). Although most respected dating of objects is based on the process of radiocarbon dating, some is based on educated conjecture. Due to the climatic conditions on the Northwest Coast, objects made of wood, by far the most common medium used there, are subject to rapid decomposition. Most researchers believe that the formline system began as two-dimensional painted images on wood (Holm 1990:607).

Even with the environmental problems, a great quantity of later objects made of wood and other media such as bone and ivory have been found with the representational formline designs, making for fairly accurate carbon dating. Recent examples of dated art reveal an increasing consistency in contemporary objects, with formline designs that are almost indistinguishable from objects made 1000 years later (Ibid., 63). One of the questions this study addresses is how artists from different northern cultures developed and maintained very similar designs while at the same time developing diverse design elements through the use of formlines in their own tribal forms of material art.

Accurate dating of objects is important to tracking the progress of the evolving formline across geographies and communities. For example: Did the Gitksan, who were 400 kilometers east on the Upper Skeena River, begin to use the formline at

³² For example, the work of some artists, even though anonymous, has been identified by their unique formline styles (Wright 1983:139-142).

the same time as the Coast Tsimshian?³³ My research—which included analyzing many hundreds of masks, totem poles, house posts, rattles, even button blankets—convincing me that there was no significant time variance. Any major time difference in the diffusion in the formline would have led to style changes the formline design of the Gitksan, which did not occur. I agree with Bill Holm’s assessment of possible evolution:

It appears to be impossible to differentiate with certainty, on the basis of style alone, two dimensional design of the four Northern tribes (Tsimshian, Haida, Bella Bella [Heiltsuk], and Tlingit) since both decorative and representative tendencies occur in the work of all, and the conventions of the art are so strong throughout this area. However, it cannot be doubted that there are tribal variations, but on the basis of present knowledge they are not apparent (Holm 1965:20-21).

As my introduction chapter indicates, the formline style on the masks of the Coastal Tsimshian he details is not noticeably different from the traditional or contemporary Upper Skeena Tsimshian formline style. However, dramatic differences do emerge in the graphic formline designs found on the “story prints” that came out of ‘Ksan, often referred as the ‘Ksan style, which is the overriding subject of this study. The story prints depict iconographical pictures using exaggerated formlines, primarily telling the story of Gitksan mythology. A specific discussion of the divergence from the traditional formline designs found in the work of ‘Ksan students and artists is found in chapters four and five.

³³ The territory of the Coast Tsimshian included the ten villages of the Lower Skeena; Gitwilgyots, Gitzaklath, Gitsees, Ginakangeek, Ginadoiks, Gitandau, Gispaklots, Gilutsa, Gitalan, and Gitwilkseba (Duff 1964b:18). There is also evidence of 5000 years of occupation in the Prince Rupert Harbor area (Fladmark, Ames and Sutherland 1990:232). The Gitksan of the Upper Skeena differed mainly in language and political organization: they were not organized above the clan, and chiefs of the highest-ranking house in a clan did not have authority over the other clans (Halpin and Seguin 1990:276) whereas Coastal Tsimshian village chiefs did (Garfield 1939:182-191).

In her exhibition catalogue, *Shapes of Their Thoughts* (1984), Victoria Wyatt states that the Native artistic response to the collective stimulus of the European appearance on the coast “can serve a valuable historical resource reflecting changes (in time) resulting from culture contact” (1984:10).³⁴ For example, trade for commercial materials such as iron, copper, silver, and gold (introduced at different times), expanded Native products. Iron tools were developed for Native use in the manufacture of objects for both Native and non-Native market. Wood, such as red and yellow cedar, was the material the Big Houses were made of, and cedar was also the artistic medium of choice for masks, rattles, and totem poles. Raw copper, found in Alaska and northern British Columbia, was normally restricted to jewelry, while sheet copper, originally from the bottoms of ships from Europe to protect from sea worms, was traded for otter pelts. The copper was first fashioned into “shield”-shaped Coppers,³⁵ which became the monetary standard in the potlatch of the Northwest Coast, but copper³⁶ was also used for accents on masks and jewelry, as later were gold and silver. Another early artistic media of choice used throughout the Northwest Coast, which had a much longer “life,” was stone³⁷: in fact, some scholars, such as Ames and Maschner, believe that “most of our knowledge of the history of the Northwest Coast art style comes from stone sculpture and

³⁴ George MacDonald offers a helpful description of the progress of artistic development on the Northern Coast in 500-year increments starting with the period 1500 B.C. (1983:99-103).

³⁵ The terms ‘Copper’ is a Western term, each tribe had a term in their own language.

³⁶ The shield-shaped coppers, regardless of the material used, such as wood, gold, silver, etc., is usually capitalized.

³⁷ Another artistic media was made popular beginning in the 1820s was argillite, a black carbonaceous shale found exclusively in Haida’s Queen Charlotte Islands (Wright 1977; 1979).

petroglyphs" (1999:219-20). While their theory is interesting, my investigations of Vancouver Island petroglyphs did not lead me to the same conclusion.³⁸ The dating of stone carvings is problematic: the crudeness of the carvings, for example, can be the result of the person doing the carving and the material. In one case on Vancouver Island, I found that the early traditional formline style "eye" lies within a few feet of the carving of a sailing ship. I thus argue that while stone carvings are certainly part of the overall history, they are not a defining part of establishing a concrete date.

The rules of the formline system, while rigid, do allow artists to express themselves as individuals, albeit within general cultural norms. One analogy to the formline might be the hundreds of fonts used in computer-driven printing, where we see a dramatic variance in the visual presentation of the English language. So too do we see variance within the rigid rules of the formline design's visual presentation. This freedom of artistic approach or "artistic license," made within limits, no doubt contributed to the artists need for individual artistic expression.

I suggest that these changes support my research of the slow evolutionary changes in the traditional formlines, which were adopted by enough artists to show a "regional difference rather than a strictly tribal style" (McLennan and Duffek

³⁸ I investigated petroglyph sites primarily in southern and southwestern Vancouver Island, up the Skeena River at Kispiox, and in southern Alaska. All sites had some anthropomorphic and zoomorphic images, and some sites had Copper-shaped designs, which most scholars would assign to post-contact. However, after years of researching the Copper, I am not convinced that the Copper design and actual smaller Coppers are solely post-contact. In many of the sites I visited, the images were of soft stone, often partially worn away. Several areas were quite large; perhaps two acres or more, and these appeared to have been used over a long period of time, as some images were quite faded and others still very clear. I have visited many other sites in America's southwest, Oregon, Utah, etc., but they are not relevant to this study.

2000:144). My research of formline variances has also shown that there is always some variance between artists, possibly due to competition among artists to see who could make the least “acceptable” change. The variance in style,³⁹ especially in the early development of the formline system would have been admired and copied, possibly leading to incremental changes in a tribal style.

Traditionally the Gitksan Tsimshian thought “each village was held to be a world apart, distinct in history, custom and law” (Seguin 1985:1)—this would have also included art, but within traditional norms. As stated earlier, the consistency of personal style has helped to identify works of the same artist; clearly the subtle variances in the regional, tribal, and individual styles kept the artistic expressions fresh for the artist, their clients and viewers. I suggest the collective changes would have resulted, in the words of Marjorie Halpin in her PhD dissertation a greater pleasure in “aesthetic contemplation” (1973:2).

Acceptance of the formline across a broad range of geographies came about mainly through the frequent pre-contact and post-contact maritime travel along the Northern Northwest Coast by resident artists of the different tribes, such as the Tsimshian (Halpin and Seguin 1990:281), the Tlingit (de Laguna 1972:332-40), and the Haida (Holm 1987:143). There were many different types of ceremonial gatherings up and down the coast. One of the major reasons for travel was the potlatch, a complex phenomenon, whose term derived from the word meaning “to give.” On all parts of the Northwest Coast, family ties were extremely important.

³⁹ The variance of style could be simply a hand with four fingers, or with three fingers. The reader is strongly encouraged to see Bill Holm’s extremely important treatise of the many variances of the formline system: *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* (1965).

People identified closely with extended families and with lineages, and in many places rank and political leadership were hereditary. Each lineage owned certain privileges. These ranged from the right to perform specific dances, masks, songs to the right to use resources in a certain geographic area. Ceremonial gatherings like potlatches served to develop and reinforce these ties under important life-cycle events such as births, weddings, deaths and initiations. Potlatches were sponsored by a host who had saved food and material goods for the express purpose of the occasion in order to establish or uphold his status position in society. All potlatches required artistic productions such as masks, rattles, blankets, frontlets, dance costumes, and so on (Codere 1950; Codere 1966; Drucker and Heizer 1967; Rosman and Rubel 1971; Adams 1973; Sewid-Smith 1979; Cole and Chaikin 1990; Bracken 1997; Jonaitis 1991; Kan 1989; Anderson and Halpin 2000).

Another influence that helped maintain the Northern formline style was the taking of slaves, which was important to both the pre-contact and post-contact economy.⁴⁰ Leland Donald, in his 1997 treatise, *Aboriginal Slavery on the Northwest Coast of North America*, argues that the work of slaves who were craft specialists in the “production of ceremonial paraphernalia and related objects were as important as the food gathers” (1997:122). The artistic contributions of slaves would thus help in the diffusion and maintenance of the regional artistic system. Ruby and Brown corroborate Donald’s research in their observation that slaves “with talent and

⁴⁰ Slavery on the Northwest Coast died out slowly beginning toward the end of the nineteenth century (Ruby and Brown 1983:299-304). Direct references are of marginal benefit. For example, the Reverend Thomas Crosby tells of Northwest Coast Native young woman who sought his protection from being sold into slavery. The publication date was 1907, but Crosby did not state when the incident actually occurred. There is no definitive evidence as to when slavery ended completely (Crosby 1907).

ability” went for higher prices (Ruby and Brown 1993:140). One can only speculate to the degree of artistic influence, but seems inconceivable that the practice of taking slaves—such an important part of the culture throughout the Northwest Coast—would not have had an impact on the regional art.

Of course, the variance in formline design continues today. Fundamental to this dissertation is my analysis of the change in formline design that occurred at the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art (‘Ksan) beginning in 1968. Before ‘Ksan, we can observe only an incremental change in the tribal designs up and down the Northern Northwest Coast of which include the Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida, and Bella Bella (Heiltsuk) peoples. However, the ‘Ksan change was not only rapid, the formline changed dramatically—rarely on the carvings of wood, but on jewelry, a ‘product’ of growing commercial importance, especially, it is the change, on silkscreen prints, that brought fame to ‘Ksan.

Prior to ‘Ksan, most Northwest Coast prints were “portraits”⁴¹ —albeit abstract portraits⁴²—of important crest animals, such as bears, frogs, etc. The prints were most often copies of formline designs found ‘in the round’ on totem poles. At ‘Ksan, multiple elements, as well as tension and a strong sense of motion, were

⁴¹ The early “portrait” animal prints are named as such because the only formlines used are those that depict the animal in repose.

⁴² Bill Holm, in his treatise on *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form*, states that there are “practically no examples of Northwest two-dimensional art that are realistic in the ordinary sense” (1965:11). While Holm does not attempt to answer why realism is not part of their art, Franz Boas made an attempt in his early treatise, *Decorative Art of the Indians of the North Pacific Coast*, writing that “realistic representations of animals are not beyond powers (but) the consequence of adaptation of the (animal’s) form to the decorative field, the native artist *cannot* attempt a realistic representation of his subject but is often *compelled* to indicate only its main characteristics” (1897:124; emphasis added). Interestingly, in his rewrite of the article in his book *Primitive Art* (1927) Boas changes his dogmatic stance on the subject to a position of less clarity.

introduced to prints, leading to an important new type of print I have named “story prints.” The contemporary changes introduced at ‘Ksan—radical to those who believe that traditional formline designs be maintained—were possible because the traditional Gitksan artists were not be found. The ‘Ksan students were encouraged to experiment, with little criticism, as they embraced the new formline approach to print art most often referred to the “Ksan style.” I must be noted that the experimentation was mainly to advance commercial sales, with little regarded to the advance to tradition. I will discuss these changes in detail in chapter four.

My deep interest in formline design and its meaning were developed during my Master’s work at the University of Washington, where Bill Holm is Professor Emeritus. Holm’s work on the formline design is perhaps the most important breakthrough in contemporary Northwest Coast art and art history, having a deep impact on me and on many other scholars, archeologists, artists, and art historians. Ames and Maschner used Holm’s concepts to understand the styles of prehistoric formline, and my work in this dissertation builds on Holm’s original contribution, taking the analysis in a new direction in order to understand what happened when the early ‘Ksan artists began to depict a new graphic design: the story-prints.

The Impact of Early Native Art as Part of the Local Economy

Roy Carlson states, “The presence of a sophisticated art style (the formline idiom) suggests full time artisans and commissioned art” (1983:28). McLennan and Duffek agree, suggesting, “Throughout the Northwest Coast some pre-contact artists were professionals, that is, they made their living in the business of art, especially

carvers, and painters” (2000:38, 144). Carlson further states, “craft specializations are evident and indications of inter-regional exchange of [artistic] ideas and innovations are clear... [as early as] 5500 years ago” (1983:22). Ames and Maschner state “specialists performed their skills as part of the household economy, but also for trade” (1999:163). They further state “the best artists were specialists ... some so famous that they worked for a series of patrons, going from commission to commission, moving from place to place with their entire family, while some professional carvers were retained [by wealthy patrons], fed and supported for as long as several years,” (Ibid., 222) while they worked on the many ceremonial objects needed for a potlatch. Additionally, Ames and Maschner state that the presence of specialists must have profoundly affected the history of art as they developed techniques and knowledge not otherwise possible, and suggest there were “local ‘schools’ of specialists” by 500 BC (Ibid., 247-48). There is ample evidence of early copper jewelry, weapons, and tools made by special artists working with raw Native copper⁴³ (MacDonald 1983:101; Ames and Maschner 1999:37, 104, 164, 171, 175, 181, 194), and bentwood boxes are also thought to have been made by specialty artists during the same period⁴⁴ (Ames and Maschner 1999:247).

Their reference to “school” is extremely intriguing but unsatisfying. Could they be referring to a “school” such as the Barbizon School of artists in France from

⁴³ My research on raw coppers also suggests there was a very early, pre-contact small prototype for the larger Coppers that became so important after contact.

⁴⁴ The search for specialists of bentwood boxes was continued by Polly Sargent when she sought instructors at the Kitanmax School. She asked Bill Reid to suggest someone who could make bentwood boxes and Holm suggested non-Native Duane Pasco, who would go on to be an influence—negative or positive, depending on one’s viewpoint. See chapter four and five.

1830 to the 1870s? The problem of comparing the Barbizon School with the evolution with the formline system is that the formline has been evolving for hundreds of years. But, Ames and Maschner also note that the Boardwalk research site in Prince Rupert Harbor (Tsimshian territory) was the richest cultural site in the area, producing “thousands of artifacts” (Ibid., 97). It also produced a wide variety of artifacts and importantly, it “seems to have been the location for fine woodworking” (Ibid., 171-74). In light of Ames and Maschner’s art ‘school’ theory, I suggest that Boardwalk could potentially have been a school site. However, the word “school” in the context of this time differs from post-contact or twenty-first-century art historical discourse. I am using “school” as a generic place of learning. If a group of artists joined together to form a commercial consortium, learning would most certainly have taken place.

Having given a great deal of thought to the local school theory, I suggest using a different terminology would be less confusing. Ames and Maschner did go on to give thought to a ‘place of artistic activity,’ specifically in the Boardwalk research area in Prince Rupert Harbor. Interestingly, they do not connect the school reference with artistic activity. I am suggesting that there was indeed “local schools of specialists” (Ibid., 248) in the Boardwalk areas. I am further suggesting that to produce “thousands” of artifacts takes hundreds artists. Such a working environment would produce, I suggest, ‘opportunities of learning.’ Using this term would reduce the confusion that “schools of specialists” does.

As the social structure of NWC tribes evolved due to the impact of the material introduced by the invading Euro-North Americans, the artistic objects for

the potlatch increased. Master carvers became more important in the culture. Even if the number of master carvers had increased, I believe they could not have filled the artistic needs of the culture solely through the use of apprenticeships. The suggestion that local schools possibly existed is therefore very important, as it offers a new approach to the concept of the education of professional artists, beyond the master carver/apprenticeship relationship espoused by most scholars, such as Edward Malin (1986:98-99). The existence of local 'school-trained' professional artists not only would have "profoundly affected the history of the art" (Ames and Maschner 1999:248), but I suggest, it would explain the similarities of the formline system found throughout the pre-contact Northern Northwest Coast. The northern tribes with their many villages could not have maintained their closely related formline styles without a substrate of common understanding—without a common exposure to education of some sort. The pre-contact 'school' concept discussed here would allow northern Northwest Coast art historians to follow the "artistic DNA" of the work over many centuries. Such an experience such as the Boardwalk site in Tsimshian territory would undoubtedly have attracted artists from the Haida and Tlingit. This would also explain the difficulty of identifying some tribal styles of actual artwork of the Northwest Coast.

Ames and Maschner report that Franz Boas describes a young Tsimshian chief, preparing for a potlatch, commissioning specific objects to be made in order to present them to invited guests. Boas states:

Then the young chief sent word to a man of the tribe of Gitlan [Gitksan] of the Tsimshian, who knew how to make carved wooden dishes; and he sent word to the Gispaxlats to make carved wooden spoons; and he sent word to the Ginaxangik to make carved wooden boxes; and he gave order to the

Gidwulgadz to make deep wooden dishes with caring; and he gave word to the Gitdzis to make carved [horn] spoons. (Ames and Maschner 1999:27; Allaire 1984:85-88).

Clearly these artists were cultural specialists creating special objects for a potlatch.⁴⁵ But there can be no doubt that some artists specialized in the creation of ceremonial or shamanic art. Clearly, this type of art, often requiring skills to work in a miniature format, such as that of soul catchers, ivory amulets, or maskettes (de Laguna, ed. 1991:205, 376). The artists' work had to enable the shaman "to make visible the powerful (and supernatural) forces at their control" (Holm 1990:605). I suggest that the skills needed to create this type of work was performed by artists at the top of their skills. Of course, shamanic art required formline experience high degree of.

In addition to the highest quality shamanic art, patrons, chiefs and other high-ranking hosts of a potlatch demanded the best of the skilled itinerant professional artists who had the imagination to create the finest objects possible for their guests. More than the skills necessary for an outstanding sculpture, the artist had to capture the personality of the patron, as the patron's reputation was based on both a high quality and comprehensive presentation (Holm 1987:134; 1990:605, Malin 1986:97). Clearly the itinerant nature of the artists would also have contributed to an unintended intertribal dissemination of the rules of the formline system. At the same time, it would have contributed to both the slow evolution and the continuity of the artistic style of the Tsimshian, Haida, Tlingit, and Heiltsuk (Bella Bella)

⁴⁵ In today's vernacular, special "dinner ware" for a potlatch would be the same as special china and silverware for Christmas or other special occasion.

collectively, while allowing for a signature tribal style, featuring characteristics such as specific crests like the Tsimshian *naxnox*. Most scholars agree that in artistic areas such as carving and painting, the Tsimshian, which included the Gitksan and the Nisga'a, exerted more artistic influence on the other tribes than vice versa. Some scholars go so far as to say the early Tsimshian and its artists, mostly anonymous, were the main motivators in the development of Northwest Coast art (Holm 1990:605, 609). Beverley Moeller states that the "Tsimshian culture had reached the highest (artistic) development among Natives of the North Pacific" (1966:14); John Swanton states that Haida songs of derision were largely in the Tsimshian language which the Haida could not translate (Swanton and Boas 1912:63); Viola Garfield states that "the Tsimshian were (the most) able musicians, dancers, and dramatists" (Garfield, Wingert and Barbeau 1951:56); and Paul Wingert states that "in a region where sculpture is the most important means of aesthetic expression, Tsimshian art represents a particularly high accomplishment ... Tsimshian sculpture must be considered the 'classic' style of the Northwest Coast" (Ibid., 94). I suggest that the possibility of creative exposure to 'fine art' among the Tsimshian would have contributed to the dominance of Tsimshian professional artists.

The research of these and many other scholars leave little doubt that the Tsimshian were the preeminent artists in many creative areas. In today's terms, having the preponderance of the market share would have attracted Tsimshian who believed they had the talent to enter the art market but needed some form of education. I suspect that gaining an apprenticeship would have been more difficult

than gaining a position in a “second tier” educational exposure. I suggest that in a creative environment due to geographical positioning, the Tsimshian would have been able to gain the competitive edge while enjoying good trade relations with both the Haida and the Tlingit. “The three northernmost tribes of the North Pacific Coast are integrated into and crosscut by two international matrilineal exogamous groups” (Dunn 1984:99; Garfield 1939:230-31).

The combined broad statements such as those by Moeller, Garfield, Wingert and many others, but especially Ames and Maschner, give this view that the subject of ‘schools’⁴⁶ needed credibility. I suggest that the examples they provide give credence to the notion that the Tsimshian were the artists of choice in the Northern Northwest Coast. A reasonable question that follows is: How did they gain prominence? As noted above the limited number of apprenticeships could not have provided the trained artists necessary to disseminate the formline system over such a wide area; but higher numbers of like-minded-educated artists would have. Inverarity supports this theory, stating “the individual artist’s style was always a group style, acceptable in its symbolism, conception, and craftsmanship to the whole group. (It has been said that) in the period before the coming of the European, Northwest Coast art presented one basic style, with minor divergences” (Garfield, Wingert and Barbeau 1950:45-6).

One problem encountered by the apprenticeship-only model is that of assigning tribal identification to art objects such as masks, rattles, pipes, daggers, combs, tools, sheep horn ladles, carved wooden bowls, bentwood boxes, and

⁴⁶ After re-reading Ames and Maschner many times, I do not believe they meant a school built of bricks and mortar but rather, artists of a shared beliefs.

frontlets. Are we to assume that the creative efforts of those few independent master carvers found in the scattered villages from the coastal and inland tribes of central British Columbia all the way to north-central coastal Alaska would not have deviated from formal formline in their development? Franz Boas (*Primitive Art*, 1927); Robert B. Inverarity (*Art of the Northwest Coast Indian*, 1950); Paul S. Wingert, (*Tsimshian Sculpture*, 1951); Aldona Jonaitis (*Wealth of Thought: Franz Boas on Native American Art*, 1995); Bill Reid, often regarded as Canada's greatest indigenous (Haida) artist; and Bill Holm, thought by many as the most knowledgeable and influential Northwest Coast art historian have all expressed difficulty in identifying the tribal affiliation of some of the work of pre-contact and post-contact traditional Northern Northwest Coast artists. I suggest that an organized educational effort between the Northern tribes, led by the Tsimshian, would account for the difficulty of "distinguishing with any certainty" (Holm 1965:20-21). Holm later stated, "[I]n its fully developed form, the design system was based on a set of explicit, formal rules that were followed with astounding uniformity throughout the northern province during the proto-historic and historic periods" (Holm 1990:606). Bill Reid observed, "In the North the art was a controlled and mannered process, determined by rules and conventions so strict that it would seem individual expression must be stifled ... the rules were there, and they were a part of a pattern that went far beyond the conventions of art, [it was] more than a part of the life of the people, [it was] the very essence of their lives" (Reid 1967: n.p.).

In 1975 the Institute for the Arts at Rice University developed an exhibition entitled *Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*. In conjunction with the exhibition, Bill Holm and Bill Reid were recorded discussing the Northwest Coast Art works in the exhibition, recordings that were transcribed and published in a book entitled *Indian Art of the Northwest Coast: A Dialogue on Craftsmanship and Aesthetics* (1975).⁴⁷ In this conversation, these two highly respected students of the Northwest Coast failed to identify with conviction the tribal affiliation of the overwhelming majority of the 102 art objects in the exhibition. What can account for so little difference between tribal formline systems; not only was the Northern formline style disseminated and fostered over a huge and diverse geographical area, it stood the test of time for many hundreds of years.

I suggest that the source of the continuity is the little known elite, exclusively Tsimshian, group of artists known as the *gitsontk*⁴⁸ (“people secluded”) (Garfield 1939:304; Shane 1984:165). This group is not to be confused with other Coastal secret societies. The *gitsontk* were much more powerful and controlling, for example, the membership of the *Nulim* (Dog-eaters) and the *Mitla* (Dancers) for the *Halait* secret societies. The *gitsontk* were also more than a secret society: they were a sacred society with hereditary rights (Shane 1984: 160-170) who “became the ruling class wherever its subversive activities were at play” (Barbeau 1950:64). Nor were they a secret society like the *Hamatsa* or *Nulim*, which were solely dancing societies. The political power of the *gitsontk* was extreme, for “the chief ... was

⁴⁷ Interestingly this book was also published in 1975 under the title of *Form and Freedom: A Dialogue on Northwest Indian Art*.

⁴⁸ As with many tribal words and terms, there are several spellings. The word *gitsontk* is also spelled *gitzontk*, and *gits'oontk*.

dependent on the *gitsontk* for the visible manifestation of his power” (Shane 1984:170). I suggest that this select group of well-paid artists and masters of illusion provided the specialized education needed to achieve the formline rules, which were far beyond what the average master carvers of totem poles would have been able to provide. For example, supporting the specialized education concept, they were the only artists to carve the *naxnox* masks,⁴⁹ some of which were articulated to change their form in order to bring out an inner being. They had to bring life to the masks, puppets, and marionettes that were used in the dramatic performance arts of the Tsimshian potlatch and other tribal potlatches (Halpin 1973).

The *gitsontk*, all nobles, were professionally and politically powerful, and they were vital to the religious life of the Tsimshian. Halpin suggests that the *gitsontk* could be considered an “incipient priesthood” (1973:87). Given the acknowledged political power of the artists, and the fact that they were commissioned throughout the Northwest Coast (Barbeau 1950:789-90), they likely contributed significantly to the influence of Tsimshian artists throughout the Northern tribes. The *gitsontk* artists also controlled the production of the paraphernalia used during ceremonies for the secret dancing societies.⁵⁰ While being a member came with the sense of

⁴⁹ *Naxnox*—inherited spirits, powers, and supernaturals—were often manifested as masks used in often dramatic dance performances. *Naxnox* paraphernalia for dances were considered potent. Although the *naxnox* had a religious power that was taken very seriously, they could also be used in social comedy (Adams 1973:42; Seguin 1984:116; Holm 2000:51).

⁵⁰ Garfield mentions that a “professional group of artists, song composers and organizers of the dramatizations were all men who had received supernatural powers, ... with the ability to carve, plan, and operate novel mechanical masks or other objects” (1939:304). While she does not identify them as the *gitsontk*, she does say that wood carvers “were the only specialized occupation” (Ibid., 329).

privilege and pride, the artists had to accept responsibility and accountability in creating art for ceremonial performance. If the ‘product’ failed—for example, if an articulated mask did not operate properly—the artist was subjected to great shame and ridicule, and, in the worst cases, was put to death (Barbeau 1950:789-90; Shane 1984:160-73; Holm 1987:134-35). Given these extreme penalties for poorly made objects, there was almost certainly an ongoing rigid educational process as a foundation for creativity, one that was beyond apprenticeships. Further, because of the artistic demands on the *gitsontk*, I suggest that they played a critical role in an educational effort to include other Northwest Coast tribes.

One of the most visible of all Northwest Coast icons is the totem pole, an object of monumental size and artistic complexity (Jonaitis and Glass 2010). Many misconceptions exist as to their meaning: some scholars have advanced the idea that poles were territorial markers such as Ronald Hawker (Hawker 2003:50); others provide evidence that poles were monuments to satanic beings. Holm’s description of the carving of poles, on an artistic level, sounds deceptively simple: he suggests “that poles should be thought of as masks, two-dimensional flat designs wrapped around a semi-cylindrical surface with the negative space carved out” (1965:24-25). Given their size and intricacy, creating a totem pole was often beyond the technical expertise of the average professional Native carver. Even today this artistic challenge is undertaken by only a select few of the best artists. Garfield and Wingert state, “a pole carver and his family were often housed and fed

When she did her research, it is likely that Garfield did not know the complexities of the *gitsontk*. Shane’s work was 45 years later (1984).

by the chief for whom he worked until the pole was finished" (1951:16).⁵¹

A young man⁵² who desired to become a professional artist and to receive the best commissions could be properly trained by a master carver. He had to exhibit artistic aptitude, get recommendations from tribal elders, and have strong ties to a high-ranking family, and someone, a family member or a sponsor, had to pay for his education. To be accepted by a master carver was a great honor, but it was rigorous training program lasting as long as ten years (Malin 1986:98; Barbeau 1950:789-90). The art of the Northwest Coast not only had to be a well-made object, it had to reflect the spiritual beliefs and sensitivities of the Northern cultures. One had to learn, for example, the specific beliefs of the patrons concerning the immortality of animals who sustained the people, and what had to be done to ensure their availability as a food source. Beyond learning personal behavior, learning the ceremonial rituals was most important, and the ceremonial art and dance manifested respect for the animal spirits in the *naxnox* form (Malin 1986:45-51).

Patrons demanded the best artists to do their work. While there was huge disparity among the artists in their technical abilities, the best artists were also multi-talented, composers of songs and dances, or gifted orators at the potlatches.

⁵¹ The cost of getting the best artist, supporting the artist and his family, getting the gifts, etc., drove some patrons into total bankruptcy (Malin 1986:97).

⁵² Originally carving was strictly a male occupation. Women were not accepted as carvers until the 1940s when Kwakwika.wakw artist Ellen Neel gained acceptance by asserting her kinship to her grandfather and well-known artist on her mother's side, Charlie James (Nuytten 1982:42-73). Malin (1986:98) has stated that no other woman totem pole carver has achieved the eminence that Neel obtained during her career. That may have been true in 1940s, but in 1986, when Malin wrote the declaration, several woman carvers had gained wide respect, including Doreen Jensen, Nancy Dawson, and the late Freda Diesing, all trained at the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art ('Ksan).

Most importantly, the artist needed to know his audience in order to create art that resonated not only with the patron but also with the community, the itinerant artists had to be culturally perceptive when working in the arts of other tribes. Nuance would have been vital, the knowledge of the subtle distinction and variation between tribal formlines mandatory. Every tribe had its own culture consisting of different beliefs. For example, the Tsimshian artists would have known the *naxnox* referred to anything that involved manifestation of the supernatural through the use of masks and other regalia. If the artists were to work in the intertribal arena that included the Bella Coola, Haida, and Tlingit, the Tsimshian artist had to know the methods, symbols, and traditions common to all the Northern Northwest Coast. In working cross-culturally, “we can assume a definite impact was made by the Tsimshian” (Gue’don 1984:175-76).

Over perhaps many days, “the patron must movingly – even eloquently – impart his ancestral story to the carver ... on the other hand the carver had to be responsive, sensitive, diplomatic, and imaginative relative to the events he was learning ... the carver must have a full appreciation of the rich assortment of tales and stories, which he would keep in mind while carving. [The carver] had to fully understand the important symbols and decisive messages the patron wished to have incorporated. He also had to trumpet these elements, however subtle and arcane, and to do so required not just the artist’s skill but also his deep comprehension of what was to be said and how. (Malin 1986:97)

So far I have emphasized the prowess of the artists. I suggest that the guests at the potlatches also had a keen eye for quality. Their discriminating views would have no doubt been made known to their hosts, as the demands of the host for quality work were, after all, to impress the guest. The winter potlatch season saw extensive travel from one potlatch to another, and these travelers had many opportunities to compare the art.

As the art developed, the appreciation of the formline, the level of education, and the expectations of patrons also increased. Because of the many potlatches held during the winter “social season”—a time of feasting and ceremony—artists, patrons, and the invited guests of the potlatch had many opportunities to compare not only the technical quality and the aesthetics of the carving of ceremonial paraphernalia, but the imagination of the artist (Ibid., 96-99). The highly respected and well-paid professional artists were no doubt in competition with each other to get the best commissions. Both early and later “carvers who had the skill and imagination were in demand everywhere on the Coast” (Holm 1987:134). I suggest that competition also contributed to the need for skilled professional artists, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century, the most prosperous years of the fur trade. The Native chiefs were also richly compensated, enabling them to stage spectacular potlatches more often (Jonaitis 2006:52-4; Cole and Darling 1990:128-130), which in turn demanded more professional artists to produce ever more dramatic ceremonial art (Knight 1996:74). There is no doubt that the fur traders brought a higher sense of property to the Native population. Unfortunately, they also brought disease.

The Impact of Introduced Disease on Northwest Coast Native Art

To understand the complex history of the Gitksan and their cultural production, we must summarize key events affecting the development of culture and, in turn, the visual practices in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The international exploration of the natural sea mammal resource, especially the sea

otter, expanded dramatically during the first quarter of the nineteenth century by fur traders from several countries, affecting Native culture in every conceivable manner. Considering the extensive literature on the negative impact of disease introduced by the fur trade, my comments will be confined to the cultural and artistic changes among the Tsimshian subdivisions, especially the Gitksan, and their neighbors where applicable.⁵³

Contact with foreign traders resulted in very high death rates. The Natives had no immunity to Western disease, and in many small and some larger communities, all of the inhabitants died—or so many died that the villages were no longer socially viable. The few remaining survivors often abandoned their village, and consolidated with other groups. This was especially true among the northern Northwest Coast tribes, such as the Tsimshian-related groups (Boyd 1990:135-48; 1999:173-91), and their neighbors, including the Tlingit (de Laguna 1972:277-79), Haida (Poole 1972:158-9), and Bella Bella (Olson 1955:320-21).

However, the early epidemics did not affect all coastal villages at the same time or to the same degree, creating a “checker board” pattern of devastation. Because the foreign ships did not stop at all coastal villages, many smaller remote villages were initially spared from the killer diseases; but in time all were affected. The inter-tribal maritime travelers attending potlatches and other social or economic functions such as trade fairs contributed to the spread of disease.

As stated, some regional areas experienced dramatic loss of life. Boyd

⁵³ This would include the Wet’suwet’en peoples of the Bulkley River Carrier (Holm 1990:606, 625), Haisla (Hamori-Torok 1990:306), Tlingit, and Haida.

estimates that the Tsimshian and their neighbors—the Tlingit, Haida, Haisla, and the Nuxalk—suffered a 66 percent mortality rate for the period of 1836-80. Based on this time frame, Boyd states that the Tsimshian “were able to absorb the sequential epidemic losses while maintaining their sociocultural integrity” (1999:223, 263). I suggest that this statement is much too broad. The loss of a number of entire Tsimshian sub-group village populations would have made it impossible to maintain art and culture, as evidenced by the Gitksan. While loss of life was dramatic, the diseases on the Northwest Coast differed from those of the “old world,” such as the Bubonic Plague. The latter were density dependent “diseases of civilization,” whereas the Northwest Coast was made up of widely dispersed “islands” of populated areas. The vector of the European plague was flea-infested vermin, whereas all of the killer diseases of the Coast came from Europeans infecting Natives who had no immunity (Ibid., 13). The last major epidemics on the Coast with high mortality rates among the Gitksan were the smallpox outbreaks in the 1860s and early 1870s, the measles in the late 1880s, and the influenza epidemic in 1918. In total, the Gitksan lost over one-third of their population (Ibid., 223).

During this period, the Gitksan at Kispiox implored of their Methodist minister Thomas Crosby, “[O]ur mends (sic) are all dying, Bring us God's word” (Crosby 1914:228). The fact that the Gitksan were asking a Christian for help from his god, and not a Gitksan shaman or “medicine” man, clearly demonstrates the breakdown of traditional culture and spiritual beliefs among the Tsimshian. Many of the master carvers, teachers, students and apprentices would certainly have died during this

period. This loss of multiple consecutive generations from the small pool of talented artists would have had a major impact on the institutional memory needed to insure the transfer of art-related knowledge from master artists to student artists. The century-long cycle of major and minor outbreaks would have interrupted the continuity of the creative process by the early twentieth century, precisely when the art of the Gitksan began to decline (Duff 1997:123).

However, not all of the impacts were negative. Initially, the early traders were primarily interested in the fur and rarely interfered with the way of life of the First Nations (Garfield, Wingert and Barbeau 1951:69; Malin 1986:164). The most “obvious” positive change was the increased wealth of many village chiefs. Through participation in the fur trade, the Natives were quickly able to more than satisfy their desire for foreign trade goods for personal use, and certain chiefs accumulated large stockpiles of durable goods. Beyond personal use, trade goods played an extremely important role in potlatch gift giving. While the literature makes minimal reference to this, photographs of the period, the 1870s and later, often reveal large amounts of foreign trade goods as potlatch gifts,⁵⁴ implying the importance of the potlatch patron. I suggest that traditional and ceremonial potlatch art, dance costumes, etc., in time it was the trade goods that became more important.⁵⁵

During the early years of the nineteenth century, there can be little doubt that

⁵⁴ For example, blankets, kitchenware, rum, tobacco, and molasses were just a few of the important trade goods as potlatch gifts (Fisher 1977:6-7).

⁵⁵ Aldona Jonaitis in her book, *Chiefly Feast* (1991) makes reference to material gifts and money given to the potlatch attendances, actual information is minimal. However, the more than 30 pictures of potlatches and activities found throughout the book are extraordinary, certainly the best collection found in any book. The pictures span at least 100 years, from the early 1880s to 1983. Studies of these pictures show the evolution of the potlatch from the gift-giving point of view. We see the foreign goods became more popular than traditional gifts.

chiefs would have used trade goods to pay the professional artists. The loss of professional artists combined with the growing demand for new potlatch art adds to the circumstantial evidence supporting the 'school' theory mentioned earlier. The Tsimshian subgroups, Gitksan and the Nisga'a, were situated on the upland waterways and so escaped the early devastating epidemics of smallpox and other diseases that would later overtake them (Boyd 1999:24-5). The newly wealthy lower-ranking chiefs were able for the first time to host potlatches (Miller and Eastman 1984:31), which greatly increased the need for ceremonial art. This would have allowed more professional artists to attain positions of prestige (Duff 1997:81; Garfield, Wingert and Barbeau 1951:70). New chiefs would have replaced leaders lost to the epidemics, again prompting an increase in the number of potlatches⁵⁶ (Usher 1974:38).

Some inherited ceremonial paraphernalia was handed down to the next chief-in line, but new art work would always be needed—from totem poles⁵⁷ to masks and rattles. New chiefs, attaining the status of nouveau riche, became the new patrons of the arts. Even if artists of a particular village were lost to the epidemics, new chiefs could buy the services of the best of the trained professional artists, master carvers, and their apprentices from other villages with the material profits

⁵⁶ An increase in the number of potlatch, over time, shows an evolution in the potlatch. I suggest that the absolute best demonstration of change is the accounts in the 1945 *Potlatch(es) at Gitsegukla*, William Beynon 1945 filed note books (edited by Anderson and Halpin, 2000) and should be read by all those in the potlatch.

⁵⁷ Early scholars, such as Marius Barbeau (1950: xi), mistakenly identified totem poles, house posts, and mortuary poles as the recent "achievements of the fur trade era" (Garfield, Wingert and Barbeau 1951:70), but there is no doubt that the fur trade era had a favorable impact on totem poles production. Today there is ample evidence that poles of all types are pre-contact (Duff 1997:82; Drucker 1955:185). I view this as another example of a robust pre-contact and post-contact art market.

from the business of trade. As need for totem poles and potlatch paraphernalia increased, the explosion of traditional art greatly increased the need for trained professional artists for the Native art market. At the same time, foreign traders saw that there was a market in Europe for Native art, often called “artificial curiosities,” “curios,” “relics,” “artifacts,” “specimens,” “crafts,” or “primitive art” among non-Natives⁵⁸ (Garfield, Wingert and Barbeau 1951:70; Cole 1985:281-2). Especially popular were traditional objects with formline designs.

It was during the nineteenth century that entrepreneurial Native artists realized new sales opportunities by creating non-traditional portrait masks depicting Europeans, model totem poles, and jewelry. Haida artists introduced, in today's business vernacular, a totally new and popular product line—argillite carvings—in the early 1820s. By the mid-1870s to the 1890s, a new market exploded in the form of museums in Europe and North America wanting to collect the material culture from what was believed to be the vanishing Native peoples of the Northwest Coast. In the race for Native art, museums employed “buying agents.” These included Native buyers, such as Louis Shotridge (Tlingit), who knew the traditional significance of the art (Cole 1985:254-67), and non-Natives, such as Marius Barbeau from the National Museum. By 1927, Barbeau had received permission to collect in a personal capacity, and he developed a large and important collection (Ibid., 268). Anthropologists and historians such as Wilson Duff (1964b:59; 1997:82) and Robin Fisher (1977:20-1) describe this period as the golden age of Native art. While I agree with Duff and Fisher, the gains of the

⁵⁸ These terms may differ depending on time period, author, etc.

museums came ultimately at the expense of Native culture—and individual Natives.

The positive assessment of contact and trade influence on Native art was not unanimous (Jonaitis, ed., 1995:332). Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson Bay Company from 1821 to 1861, provides an early example of a Native art consumer decrying the shift in “traditional” art: he “saw with sadness ... The striking [non-traditional] changes in Native art, ‘they [are now] carving steamers [ships], animals, etc., very neatly in stone, wood, ivory, and argillite, imitating in short everything that they see, either in reality or in drawings’” (Vaughan and Holm 1990:27). The new market for non-traditional art was evolving quickly. For example, there was a shift to new and important product lines, such as carved gold and silver bracelets using traditional formline designs.⁵⁹ Clearly, trade with tribes of the Northern Northwest Coast during the first 150 years after Russian contact in 1741 was an exciting era of artistic exploration throughout the Northern Northwest.

Trade, always important to village culture, now became a commercial lifeline, allowing artists to move their works of art to the non-Native consumer market. Joyce Wike states, “Northwest Coast society rushed out to meet the sea otter trade, to use it, and [then] to shape it to the society's own ends” (1951:102).

Euro-Canadian Christian Missionaries and Their Impact on Native Art and Culture

⁵⁹ Silver and gold bracelets are often referred to as potlatch gift items. However, one of the earliest mention of silver bracelets was by Hudson Bay Company employee John Dunn, who recorded seeing Tsimshian women with “several bracelets on the arms” in 1836, making them an early and coveted Native item (1844:186-88, 191).

While the fur trade introduced several unintended deadly diseases, resulting in the deaths of thousands of aboriginals, the various denominations of the Christian religion in concert with Canadian federal and provincial governments proved to be far more formidable opponents to the traditional arts and culture of the Tsimshian. The development of a Christian membership through conversion on the Northwest Coast is believed by many scholars to be a “complex, multilayered colonial act” (Neylan 2003:5). Formal missionary activity began on the Northwest Coast in 1857, when the controversial Anglican lay missionary William Duncan was sent from England to establish a mission at Fort Simpson. A man of great tenacity with a fervent sense of purpose, he believed that as long as the Tsimshian remained in daily contact with the white society at Fort Simpson—with its influence of “drunkenness and revelry”—“no real or permanent good can be affected” (Stevenson 1986:40). Duncan decided to move his mission to the abandoned village site of Metalakatla, north of Fort Simpson.⁶⁰

Duncan expected everyone to acquiesce to his demands. Labeled a “severe disciplinarian [who would] use the lash” to gain his ends (Large 1996:22),⁶¹ he was initially successful. He once stated, “After punishing a slave with twenty lashewith sticks, I asked him if he now [understood] his sin? He said he did and thanked me

⁶⁰ Given that this study is primarily about the Gitksan Tsimshian and the fact that the great amount of information on William Duncan in the literature, I suggest those interested in Duncan consult the several texts but especially *William Duncan of Metlakatla* by Jean Usher (1974).

⁶¹ R. Geddes Large, a medical doctor who lived at various locations on the Skeena River, including Hazelton, for more than 50 years, justifies Duncan's use of the lash by stating that “those were primitive times, and doubtless stern measures were required” (1996:23). As a Native person, I find this type of treatment, and its justification, all in the name of God, the most abhorrent kind of discrimination.

for having had him punished” (Usher 1974:83). Duncan thus mainly used physical violence on those who broke his laws in his attempt to change the traditional culture. Duncan was most successful with those Tsimshian who had little chance of success within their traditional culture (Halpin and Seguin 1990:281), and those who were fearful of disease, telling them “the plagues (they were experiencing) were sent by the lord as punishment for their sins”⁶² (Boyd 1999:196). However, he did use some traditional arts to advance his agenda. For example, in referring to two traditional carved poles representing Tsimshian crests that rested on either side of the altar in the Indian chapel in Old Metlakatla near Port Simpson (Ibid., plate 1, XII), Duncan stated, “I never interfered with the crest business. It was very helpful to me in keeping the peace between members of the same crest. That has been of great advantage to me” (Ibid., 93, endnote 14, pl. 53). A photograph of the interior of the Native church at New Metalakatla taken in 1908 does not show any sign of Tsimshian art (Dunn and Booth 1990:296), but there is a photograph of a Tlingit style totem pole in front of the first house constructed (Murray 1985:160).

Over the next two decades, Duncan’s often-dictatorial methods brought about a nearly complete acculturation by the Metlakatla Tsimshian.⁶³ He insisted that his

⁶² Clearly Duncan knew that vaccines existed to protect against smallpox but obviously lied to enhance the sham belief that his god was more powerful than the Native gods. He went on to vaccinate those he converted, ‘proving’ his claims of Christian protection (Boyd 1999:195).

⁶³ Duncan established the village of Metlakatla in 1892. He, however, a strict disciplinarian with his own set of rules was not an ordained minister, and after several years of conflict with the Anglican Church, he was excommunicated and moved his followers from British Columbia to Annette Island in Alaska and established New Metlakatla, creating a Tsimshian subculture, almost completely devoid of the traditional Tsimshian way of life (Dunn and Booth 1990:295; Miller 1984:31).

converts give up face painting, shamanism, gambling, the building of traditional big houses, traditional dancing, and potlatching (Dunn and Booth 1990:297; Murray 1985:44). These restrictions were supported by the new missionaries posted in Tsimshian territory, especially another Englishman, the Revered Thomas Crosby (Bolt 1992:35).

The restriction on traditional big houses was motivated by the desire to stop potlatches: these were held mostly in the winter indoors, and the dances and other ceremonies held at night by the fire created a “theatrical” atmosphere for masks, “magic” makers, puppeteers, etc. Depriving the Tsimshian of a proper venue effectively destroyed the theatrical drama that was integral to the potlatch. Both Duncan and Crosby ordered the Tsimshian to destroy their potlatch paraphernalia; however, Crosby was the most impassioned about banning Native art and ceremonial practices, writing, “everything of heathenism, is of the devil”⁶⁴ (Bolt 1992:35). George Dawson states that “by 1878 most of the original (totem) poles at Port Simpson had been cut down as missionary influence spread among the people” (Dawson 1880:156; Halpin and Seguin 1990:281).

The potlatch law, part of the Indian Advancement Act of 1884, was inspired by the commonly held belief that Canadians had the right and duty to assert their political and religious agenda on the Indigenous people. This law, just one illustration of the Euro-Canadian superiority that led to grave injustices, especially

⁶⁴ While Crosby was impassioned about banning Native art for Natives, he showed no scruples about collecting Native art for himself and others. He accumulated and sold several large collections, which included totem poles and housefronts. One of these went to George Heys and became part of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian (Cole 1985:22-24, 30, 40, 90, 218-225, 292).

in the area of art, and it perhaps represents the most grievous example of paternalism forced on the Canadian Indigenous people of the Northwest Coast. George DeBeck, a Native agent who worked tirelessly to pass the law, believed the law would make the Natives “do what I know is best for themselves” (Cole and Chaikin 1990:179). The potlatch law is also one of the most studied cultural aspects in the literature.⁶⁵ Scholarship on the Tsimshian is well represented, including, but not limited to, works by Adams (1973); Anderson and Halpin (2000); Garfield, Wingert and Barbeau (1951); Miller (1997); Miller and Eastman (1984); Seguin (1984); and Seguin (1985). However, even with the combined work of all these scholars, the potlatch⁶⁶ still remains a confusing concept. Because this study concentrates specifically on the shift of the arts of the Gitksan from traditional to contemporary art, I will restrict my brief comments to the art of the feasts of the Gitksan peoples.

While all potlatches of the Northwest Coast had similar elements of high art, the aspect that distinguished traditional Tsimshian from traditional Haida, Tlingit, or other Northwest Coast peoples was their elaborate totemic *naxnox* crest system. For the Haida and Tlingit, the crest animal was the complete whole animal (for example, the raven is thought of in its entirety); Tsimshian, on the other hand, see the raven in its many manifestations, with no restrictions on the number of bodily

⁶⁵ While Crosby was impassioned about banning Native art for Natives, he showed no scruples about collecting Native art for himself and others. He accumulated and sold several large collections, which included totem poles and housefronts. One of these went to George Heys and became part of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian (Cole 1985:22-24, 30, 40, 90, 218-225, 292).

⁶⁶ The term “potlatch” was never used by any traditional group on the Northwest Coast. Today the Gitksan people refer to these events as *yukw*, or the English equivalent of “feasts.”

variations on a theme, Tsimshian artists had to be exceptionally creative to create a physical presence of abstract *naxnox* spirits based on Tsimshian mythology.

Halpin, in her 1973 doctoral dissertation, identified more than 750 crests. While Halpin's is the most exhaustive study to date, there is little doubt that many more crests than those listed existed. With an open spiritual system, the number and types of crests were dynamic. For example, William Beynon, who attended the 1945 potlatches at the Gitksan village of Gitsegukla, describes a Japanese warrior *naxnox*⁶⁷ dance (Anderson and Halpin 2000:97-8, endnote 5, pp. 258).

In order to assume a crest—whether a newly conceived crest, one received through succession of a deceased chief, or one transferred by a living chief to his successor—a chief had to give or participate in a feast (potlatch) in order to have the crest name validated,⁶⁸ a ceremony that had a huge impact on Tsimshian arts.

Halpin has written eloquently on the ceremony:

Had we been given the privilege of attending a mid-nineteen-century Tsimshian potlatch, we would have seen a visual spectacle of great splendor, a magnificent panoply of human faces juxtaposed with animal headdresses, of human bodies enveloped in animal skins and robes bearing animal representations. The firelight would have lit up great carvings of strange animal forms in human postures ... we would have noticed that the men who made the speeches wore the more elaborate headdress richly decorated with shining abalone. We would have noticed that younger men and women were being presented to the assembly, with special attention being called to the animal representations they were wearing. We would have begun to realize that some kind of system utilizing the natural world was being displayed ... [it

⁶⁷ The authors suggest that this *naxnox* was new, probably referring to World War II. Beynon describes that *halait* attendants calling out a "terrible warrior is running among our people ... It may be a Japanese warrior."

⁶⁸ For a thorough and comprehensive discussion on the subject of Tsimshian and its structure, the use of crests, crest-bearing objects, human and non-human crests and crest totemism, see Halpin (1984:16-35)

is] the rules underlying the system of crests which accounted for the visual splendor of the potlatch, now lying unknown and unused on museum shelves. [The crests] were once objects of profound meaning and importance to the people who made and used them. We have tended to reduce those meanings—to simplify that system. (1984:16-7)

The *gitsontk* artists created *naxnox* crest-bearing art objects and regalia (Neylan 2003:36). From a business point of view, then, the *gitsontk* artists had a monopoly on creating the most important “product” of the Tsimshian. Halpin states that crests were found on house entrance poles, house posts, house front paintings, house beams, rafters, and ceremonial entrances. Crests were also on ceremonial wear, spruce root hats,⁶⁹ robes, button blankets, headdresses, feast dishes and ladles. Halpin also states that crests were found on totem poles. This calls into question the commonly held belief that totem poles were not spiritual or religious in any way. Furthermore, the totem pole cannot be raised without a potlatch, thus making it an integral part of the potlatch, not a separate entity. This is a very important subject for future research. Finally, Halpin states that objects without crests were primarily expressed as power aspects, different way of viewing specific things, of Tsimshian cosmology, including traditional halibut hooks, spoons, boxes, Coppers, rattles, dance aprons, Chilkat blankets, and masks⁷⁰ (Halpin 1984:21). This list reminds us that “crest art” is much more than the totem pole, mask, or rattles (but not shaman rattles). To not list these objects is, as Halpin states, an invitation

⁶⁹ Spruce root hats with woven “rings” on the top are often referred to as potlatch disks, representing the number of potlatches the owner of the hat has given. However, there is no evidence of this usage among the Tsimshian. The hats were important crests: the more rings (with a range of three to nineteen) the hat had, the more prestigious the crest (Halpin 1984:27).

⁷⁰ Miller (1997:99) sees masks differently. He states, “the wearing of masks [is] the primary expression of the *naxnox*.”

to simplify the crest system, compounding the potential to lose our understanding of the complexity of what is perhaps the most the important use of spiritual art on the Northwest Coast. This is incredibly important. The crest 'business' is complex; I suggest that some people find this and some other aspects of Northwest Coast culture, "the most complex on the Northwest Coast" (Halpin 1984:17). Barbeau explained some the complexity with the following, "a crest without a myth paradox to explain its origin, and its connection with the owner, was an impossibility, and such a myth was the patrimony of a clan or a family" (1917:560).

The Christian belief system began to believe that ordaining Natives would help to develop harmonious relations between Christian and non-Christian Natives. For many of the Christian Native missionaries, an "overlap" in their dogmas included both traditional and Christian beliefs. For example, in a 1895 letter published in the "Missionaries Outlook," Lewis Gray, an ordained Native missionary who maintained his position as shaman (Neylan 2003:133-4), wrote, "[W]e have no division in our village [the Gitksan village of Kitsequecla]; all have worked together for the [Methodist] church, [and] the heathen people had a big time here with their 'potlatch' totem poles" (Gray 1898:85). These Native missionaries may be the reason, at least in part, that the potlatch continued in certain Gitksan villages.

Of course, not all Christian Natives advocated a harmonious relationship. One Salvation Army convert wanted help from the church to stop a feast, writing, "destroy them children lord. Destroy because they not believe they Holy Spirit" (Neylan 2003:321, footnote 19). But it was not only individual Tsimshian converts

who wanted to stop the feasting. The following notice was posted in the Gitksan village of Kispiox.⁷¹

We, the undersigned, being chiefs and others of Kispiox, wish it to be known:

1. That we desire that there should be no more potlatches held in this village of Kispiox.
2. That we want no more old fashioned feasts, but if any feasts are held, then we desire them to be set out with clean tables and everything made up-to-date.
3. We desire that there be no calling of names if any money is dispersed at a feast given in memory of a dead chief or any other person.
4. We want all dancing to be abolished at our feasts.
5. We desire that there should be no more dressing up in old heathen and old fashioned costume, or any painting of the face.

It is clear that in 1945 the traditional and Christian Tsimshian were still at odds, and during the five days of illegal potlatches, they became an even more contentious issue among the Gitksan. William Beynon,⁷² a Coast Tsimshian chief and an important ethnographer working on the Gitksan and other Tsimshian tribes, attended a series of Potlatches/feasts in the Gitksan village of Gitsegukla. During a lull in the activity, Beynon interviewed young men on their thoughts about the recent festivities. One man was unhappy about the “amount of [gift] money [given] that could have bought us several small saw mill plants and kept the entire village employed. But if we did not participate ... there are many ways of making you

⁷¹ Cole and Chaikin date the notice to “about 1908” (1990:42), while Cassidy states the notice was “found with other papers dated 1914” (1984: 26).

⁷² Beynon was the most important Tsimshian ethnographer working with Marius Barbeau, Franz Boas, Viola Garfield and Philip Drucker. Much of his work, independent of the above scholars, has been used by other scholars such as Wilson Duff, John Adams, and Jay Miller. In addition to his duties as an ethnographer, he was an important collector; he sold a large collection to Sir Henry Wellcome and together with Marius Barbeau collected for the Royal Ontario Museum (Anderson and Halpin 2000:3-13).

embarrassed among our people. So we have to subscribe to their [the traditional elders'] wishes." Another man stated, "[W]e have to do this or our lives will be miserable ... so whether we think it right or wrong we are forced into acceding to their wishes" (Anderson and Halpin 2000:192). Change in social traditions is always difficult, especially at first on the younger generations. But then, as the numbers of the younger generations increase, the situation reverses: as the older generation dwindles, so does their collective power. The rapid and dramatic nature of the change brought about by the invasion of the Europeans made the situation on the coast especially difficult.

Even before the Gitsegukla feasts, fifty-five young Christian Gitksan men in Hazelton in 1950 petitioned the Department of Indian Affairs for authority to bypass the traditional process in electing village leaders. They felt that "the older generation ... seem to prefer to practice the old customs and ceremonies" (Cole and Chaikin 1990:180). Apparently the young men believed they had permission to do so, because three years later they elected one of their own as chief. However, at the insistence of the elder Natives, the Indian Agent⁷³ suspended the election.

While Christianity is often described as the root cause of the conflict over "old customs and ceremonies" like the potlatch, the actual causes are many and complex—beyond the scope of this study. However, it is clear that the arts of the Gitksan and other peoples of the Northwest were dramatically affected by the generational and religious clash of traditional values, by disease, and by trade with

⁷³ Because the "village" of Hazelton did not incorporate until the middle of the twentieth century, the Indian Agent had extraordinary powers over all matters concerning administrative affairs.

diverse people over many centuries. While much is written in the literature on the defiance of Kwakiutl and their refusal to abandon the potlatch, little is mentioned about the defiance of Gitksan. The Gitksan did conduct the potlatch in violation of the law (Cole and Chaikan 1990:179-83; Anderson and Halpin 2000), but the “interdependent trilogy of (traditional) art, culture and economy” could not remain intact (Ksan Association, n.d.: 8).

Before contact in 1774, the art market⁷⁴ was already flourishing, with trained professional artists supported by patrons. Soon after contact, disease began a slow erosion of traditional art of the Gitksan with a shift from the creation of traditional ceremonial art to art for the non-Native market. By the twentieth century, traditional art was no longer critical to the Native culture. Native patrons, crucial to funding artists, were no longer interested because of legal and missionary harassment, and older artists, with no work and no prospect of work, did not pass on their knowledge. The relentless attacks on all the nations of the Northwest Coast led to a dramatic loss of the arts. Traditional Native art without cultural context meant little. However, this would change with the introduction of a commercial market for the potlatch art.

Since the 1945 totem pole potlatch (feast) at Gitsegukla, there have been a number of funeral and totem pole feasts among the Gitksan, but the dance and the songs were modern. Cultural memory had waned considerably, making cultural and

⁷⁴ I have elected to use contemporary terminology in the manner of other scholars when referring to the arts of the Northwest Coast because all terms used to describe Native arts come from modern language, beginning with Franz Boas’s application of the word “art” to Native creativity (Boas 1897); Bill Holm’s use of new terms such as formline, ovoids, U-forms and tertiary U’s (Holm 1965); and Steve Brown’s introduction of the term “trigon” (Brown 1995:273-74, 281, endnote 3).

artistic resurgence without outside assistance impossible among the Gitksan at that point in their history. This study is about the development of 'Ksan and its unintentional impact on contemporary Gitksan art, Canadian Northwest Coast art, and Canadian indigenous art. My study seeks to demystify and dismantle the growing mythology surrounding 'Ksan, and to clarify the complex genesis of the period between 1967 and 2010.

CHAPTER 2: THE TOURIST INDUSTRY IN NORTH AMERICA: THE APPROPRIATION AND COMMODIFICATION OF NATIVE ART AND CULTURE

During the mid to late nineteenth century, the Canadian government and the Canadian Christian community were hard at work dismantling the Native cultures of the Northwest Coast. This resulted in a net loss of traditional ceremonial and tourist objects, including totem poles. However, by the mid-1880s the American railway industry—specifically the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroads—was successfully catering to tourists with an interest in the tribes of America's Southwest. This led to the establishment of major Native art and craft markets for tourists, first in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and soon after in Taos and the Pueblos in the area. By the 1920s, Canadian National Railway (CNR) officials began to explore similar tourist possibilities by taking advantage of the Native cultural icon of the Northwest Coast: the totem poles.⁷⁵ However, these poles—destroyed or sold to Canadian and non-Canadian markets, primarily museums—were difficult to find. The only convenient location that retained enough poles to build tourist interest was in the Gitksan territory of the Upper Skeena River area in British Columbia.

In this chapter I briefly explore the successful American model of tourism in the Native Southwest, using it as a point of comparison with the Canadian case in order to better understand why Canadian attempts to develop a similar Native tourist experience failed. Early Canadian efforts, particularly of ethnologist Marius

⁷⁵ Extensive development and research on totem poles, see Jonaitis and Glass (2010).

Barbeau⁷⁶ from the National Museum of Canada, saw the development of plans to create a national park in the Upper Skeena area based on the culture of the Gitksan Tsimshian. My research will show that his detailed plan, submitted to the Department of Indian Affairs in 1924, almost certainly became the blueprint for the establishment of 'Ksan thirty years later. Because of its importance, I have included the relevant sections of the plan in this chapter.

As noted in chapter one, the first Europeans to collect Northwest Coast art were associated with the fur trade. These collectors had no knowledge of the cultural significance of these objects, seeing them only as 'exotic' specimens from the Natives of the Northern Northwest Coast. The collection of art and material culture from the Native people of North America's East Coast began as early the 1630s CE (Cole 1985:ix); we can compare this data to that of the Northwest, since this practice only began in earnest roughly 200 years later.

Except for Franz Boas, the tenacity of the anthropology field to retain the scientific argument, and the intimidation factor felt by those who were reticent to fight the science, made change slow but the process of change did begin. The category of Native American artistic creativity went through various stages of descriptive terminology, from being a simple trade item, to a 'scientific specimen' to

⁷⁶ Marius Barbeau, a French-Canadian born in 1883, was a gifted student, and the first French-Canadian Rhodes scholar. Originally a law student, he quickly changed his studies to the broad area of anthropology. A man of many interests including French-Canadian folklore and folk music, his first documented interest in the far off Northwest Coast people began with his change of university major to anthropology. In 1910 he submitted his bachelor degree thesis, unpublished, "The Totemic System of the Northwestern Indian Tribes of North America" (Nowry 1995:74-5, 82-3, 154-59). This experience would lead to a lifelong interest in art of the First Nations people of the Northwest Coast. See also *Around and About Marius Barbeau: Modelling Twentieth-Century Culture*, edited by Jessup, Nurse and Smith (2008).

'ethnographic artifact,' 'craft,' 'primitive art,' 'curio,' to a gradual recognition of art as art in Canada and U.S. in twentieth century. There were several agendas at work to bring about change. The most important early agenda was to stimulate employment for the Native peoples. Terminology was also a factor in a marketing strategy to sell Native authentic arts and crafts. Another important consideration for both Canada and the United States was to incorporate Native art as part of a self-serving national artistic identity, to include Native heritage into the respective nation state. Interestingly, the romantic Native imagery became a dominant theme as nationalist symbols in both countries as evidenced by the number of coins minted with an Indian image.

The earlier collections were primarily for private consumption by the traders, or were undertaken by collectors under orders of the owners of the trading ships. Most of the art was brought to the old world in government-owned ships of discovery, such as those captained by England's James Cook (Kaeppler 1978:251-69), George Vancouver (Cole 1985:2), and Spain's Alejandro Malaspina (Cutter 1991:48-9). However, the early collections of Northwest Coast were much more than collections of fine art. They were, and are, collections of Native cultural thought. Every aspect of the "visual language" of the artists was unknown; for example, it would have been impossible for foreigners to ascertain the cultural nuances of traditional language or to identify the abstract mythological animals in much of the artwork. Many of the masks were collected separately when they were intended as an ensemble for ceremonial dance: without knowledge of the complete

costume, understanding of its meaning or use was lost.⁷⁷ Victoria Wyatt, inspired by a statement by noted anthropologist Wilson Duff—specifically, that “art is for thinking as well as for seeing,” (1975:74)—further developed this idea in the 1984 exhibition *Shapes of Their Thoughts*. She states that through the fine art of the Northwest Coast, “The artists spoke to the tourist markets which burgeoned in the late nineteenth century” (1984:10-11). Clearly the tourist markets grew, but whether there was an increase in the understanding of the art is debatable—and likely not the case.

In the 1880s, the belief that the Native cultures of the Northwest Coast were rapidly declining and would soon be extinguished led to a flurry of interest in Native material culture, particularly among American and European museums. Early development of tourist interests in American museums—such as the Smithsonian Institution, New York’s American Museum of Natural History, and Chicago’s Museum of Natural History—presented Native art, or “curiosities,” as the final remains of Native cultures, intriguing things from a different time and place. These curiosities, from both the traditional and contemporary Native peoples of the time were placed in museums of natural history alongside the bones of extinct animals. Natural history museums were extremely popular with the tourists, and almost

⁷⁷ Ann Fienup-Riordan (1996) notes that early collectors such as Edward William Nelson recognized their shortcomings relating to collecting, “Unfortunately, I failed to secure the date by which the entire significance of customs and beliefs connected with (Yup’ik) masks can be solved satisfactorily” (Nelson 1899:395). Based on my experience as a curator at Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, both early and contemporary tourist collectors often have little information about their collection.

everything in them was exotic.⁷⁸ In such settings, I believe Native art naturally took on the identity of the particular museum in which it was housed. One of the most important examples, New York's Brooklyn Museum was one of the early leading collectors of Native arts from Canada's Northwest Coast and Native Ainu art and crafts from Japan's Northeast Coast.⁷⁹ When in the 1930s the museum changed its focus to Western art, it was re-named the Brooklyn Museum of Art (Fane, Jacknis and Breen 1991:6). As the tone of the museum changed, so did its posture toward the creative work of the Native people. Today the art of these Native peoples from different sides of the globe, the North American Native peoples and the Ainu, are waiting in storage for researchers to show interest.⁸⁰

The collections of American museums were Canada's loss. It was only after severe criticism in 1903 for their lack of interest in collecting "the very choicest specimens of Native ingenuity" (*Daily British Colonist*, November 16, 1903, pp. 7; Cole 1985:226-30), that Canadian museums, such as the Royal British Columbia Museum, began to seriously collect Northwest Coast art. Even the Canadian Museum of Civilization (formally National Museum of Man) did not collect Inuit art until the 1950s (Goetz 1993:357-381), and the contemporary art of the Northwest Coast was not collected until the 1970s when George MacDonald, archaeologist for

⁷⁸. For Natural History Museums, popularity has only increased over the years. For example, Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History continues to be their second most popular, second only to their Air and Space Museum. The Natural History Museum has almost 12 million visitors a year, and the Air and Space Museum has over 12 million visitors a year (see <http://www.si.edu>). Other extremely popular museums include American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and The Field Museum in Chicago.

⁷⁹. The Native people from Canada and the Ainu of Asia's Northwest Coast and Northeast Coast were popular with both anthropologists and the tourists.

⁸⁰ Most museums, particularly the older museums have huge collections in storage.

the museum, took an interest in the work of the students from the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art (Personal communication. May 31, 2002).

As museums evolved, and in particular natural history museums, they became surrogates for travel to exotic cultural tourist destinations (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:132). In one of the great paradoxes in the history of Native art, as the era of Native art created for Native purposes dramatically declined (due to the Euro-North American laws and religion) and the interest for ethnographic collections by museums also waned, commercial entrepreneurs began to use “caricatures” of Native art and culture (i.e., Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show) to increase the profitability of unrelated businesses, particularly the fledgling tourist travel industry that targeted Native cultures.

Many scholars have noted that traditional Native artists adapted their “product line” to take advantage of an ever growing and changing tourist market for Native art. These include: Garfield, Wingert and Barbeau (1951); Wyatt (1984); Francis (1992); Reid, M. (1993); Macnair (1993); Anderson (1996); Duff (1997); Berlo and Phillips (1998); Meyer and Royer (2001). In spite of acknowledging Native artists’ response to market demands, they made little or no mention of the importance of the “place” of tourist markets as locations for the creation and sale of Native art. My research has shown that over the last 60 years many emerging artists have come to live and create their art in tourist areas such as Victoria and Vancouver, B.C., where they have ready access to the many gift shops, galleries, and

tourists to sell their work,⁸¹ while established artists have the freedom to live where they choose.

Another important element in the success of the tourist art market is the influence of “trade magazines,” such as *American Indian Art* magazine and the *Native Peoples* magazine, which allow the Native art buyer to be in contact with galleries and auction houses around North America.⁸² The Internet is also becoming more important to both buyer and seller, allowing the artist to bypass the middleman and deal directly with the buyer.⁸³

On the negative side, while it is true that emerging artists have ready access to the international tourist outlets in Victoria, the competition is fierce. Historically, “place” was often the most important retail outlet for the Native artist, but today the virtual and print tourist market place is replacing it for both the consumer and the artist. Often artists continue to sell their work through galleries with online capabilities. The virtual market place fills an important niche, seen especially when the economy was down in the first decade of the twenty-first century, but it remains to be seen just how important the online galleries will be. It is clear, however, that actual “places” with connections to a Native environment (i.e., Santa Fe) will

⁸¹ Because of the close proximity of the American cities in western Washington and western Oregon States, the tourist areas of Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia have been established as tourist markets for First Nations art for over 100 years.

⁸² For example, the Douglas Reynolds Gallery in Vancouver is one of premier galleries for Northwest Coast art in Canada. It has an excellent and convenient website featuring the work of some of the best artists such as Bill Reid, Robert Davidson, and Don Yeomans. See <http://www.douglasreynoldsgallery.com>.

⁸³ I have also dealt with artists whose work I had seen in Native Art magazines, books, etc. By doing a Google search on the Internet, one can get contact information and deal directly with the artist.

continue to play an important role in marketing for Native artists, particularly due to their being vacation locations.

Both the American and Canadian Native-based tourist industry recognized very early that tourists were interested in multifaceted experiences. By the early 1880s in the American Southwest, the railway became the conduit for tourists to see not only the wonders of nature but “real Indians” from the comfort and safety of their railway club cars.⁸⁴ The Native people and their culture quickly became marketable products for the Santa Fe Railroad.⁸⁵ The Railway’s Natives focused marketing campaign, lasting until 1968, represents North America’s most successful commercial appropriation of the culture of its Native peoples. As Strein, Vaughan and Richards’ remark, “no other railway, and perhaps no other industry in the history of America ... used the mystique of a land and its [Native] people to market itself to its customers ... [the] educated, refined, and well dressed travelers” (Strein, Vaughan and Richard 2001:36). The railroad’s artwork—with images of the Native people and culture and Native American art—became a key element in the “advertising campaign that developed into a virtual art form” (Ibid., 2001:8, 65).⁸⁶

⁸⁴ It was only a few years earlier, in 1876, that the wildly popular American Civil War hero General George Armstrong Custer was defeated by the Sioux. The U.S. Cavalry were still fighting running battles with Crazy Horse during 1876 and 1877, and Geronimo did not finally surrender until 1886.

⁸⁵ The Santa Fe Railway was part the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railway system (Strein, Vaughan and Richard 2001).

⁸⁶ By 1900 the Santa Fe Railways offered free trips to select non-Native artists in exchange for the use of their paintings in advertising. However, in 1903 the railroad began to purchase all the paintings to avoid reproduction problems. Their collection now exceeds 600 paintings. Today the most popular and most sought after collectibles are the Santa Fe calendar prints, which began in 1907 and lasted until 1993 (Strein, Vaughan and Richard 2001:94).

Their advertising artwork, based on true cultural examples, was then and is now a popular and expensive collectable.

Along with developing the “imaginary Indian” (Francis 1992), the railway had to deliver year-round large numbers of tourists to a destination with real Indians—Santa Fe, New Mexico. The annual Santa Fe Indian Market has become the largest celebration of Native art and culture in North America. In the beginning, local artists from the many Pueblos, the Jicarilla and Mescalero Apache, the Zuni, Navajo, Ute and other tribal nations from the Southwest came to Santa Fe because that was where the buyers were. Today Santa Fe has approximately 250 art galleries and 12 museums, and is the home of the Institute of American Indian Arts, the only accredited four-year fine art Native college with a curriculum devoted to the arts of the Native peoples of North America, including the Northwest Coast. Santa Fe is a full service four-season tourist destination.

While some galleries do represent the more successful Native artists (e.g., R. C. Gorman), other Native artists have had more opportunities to sell their work directly to the consumer. I argue, however, that Strein, Vaughan and Richard overstate the case with their claim that “the Santa Fe Railway became a prominent patron of Taos and Santa Fe artists” (2001:94). Although the railroad did bring the tourists to the art market, much of the advertising was patronizing. For example, a cartoonish ‘Indian-boy’ figure named “Chico” was featured in much of the advertising for many years (Ibid., 9). Another campaign centered on “Indian guides” who would entertain travelers during the train trip with Native legend and lore of the Southwest. These guides were described as “real Indians . . . educated and

courteous" (Ibid., 68). This is perhaps the most obvious and successful appropriation of Native culture in the history of North America.

The tourist desire for the Native experience was powerful. Other elements of the Native culture, especially the performance arts, were perhaps a larger draw than the Native art itself. Seeing the artists actually creating their art is also a highlight for many tourists, and provides the incentive for tourists to buy Native work—from tourist kitsch to the finest examples of high art. It must be noted that tourist kitsch is for many artists the first step in the development of an artist. The transition from craft person to artist is common, and there are many examples of tourist "craft items" recognized later as fine art. The "walk around" tourist art market gives tourists who want a quality piece of affordable art the opportunity to compare not just prices, but quality. Furthermore, Native tourist centers provide an educational element, allowing tourists to talk to the artists about their work and culture. The creation of Native works of art such as British Columbia (and Alaska) totem poles in front of the public serves the same function as performance art. The viewing tourists often have no intention of buying a totem pole; it is the performance aspect of the art that they are interested in. This interest often leads to smaller affordable purchases and the possibility of a conversation with the artist. The carving shed at the Royal British Columbia Museum is a wonderful example of a public viewing area for the creation of totem poles, masks, and drums (Personal experience 2001-2005).

Today, many Native cultures also have ceremonies that are open to the public. This gives tourists the opportunity, and privilege, to observe a part of the culture. However, the Native culture can also profit from this. For example, the

Ainu, the indigenous people of Japan, have an extremely important ceremony called *iyomante*, in which a bear, the god of the mountain, is ceremoniously killed so that its spirit may return to the land of the gods. This ceremony was prohibited after the Ainu lost their wars with the Japanese, but later revived, when the Japanese saw the economic advantage of performing the ceremony for the tourist trade. I believe that without the forced “revival,” the ceremony would have been lost to cultural memory. Ceremonies like these not only sustain cultural memories and experiences, they add to current research. I suggest these experiences—be they of the Ainu, of the Gitksan Tsimshian, or “generic” to the Northwest Coast—are a vital part of cultural regeneration. To cite another example, Tillicum Village is a popular tourist site a short ferry ride from downtown Seattle. Even though Seattle is in Coast Salish territory, a tribe with no totem poles, the Tillicum Village represents a traditional Northern Northwest Coast village *with* totem poles. The four-hour experience includes a traditional “potlatch style” salmon dinner, a dance performance, singing, Native art and crafts (including the carving of totem poles), and other cultural displays “which enhance the ethnic and cultural heritage of these peoples” (Johnson and Uneriner 2001:44-61; Connerton 1989:41-7; Dubreuil 2004). These activities, while often providing a fascinating window into the culture, have drawbacks. A tourist “potlatch” dinner such as described above offers only a glimpse of an actual potlatch, which could last several days. Most tourist “ceremonies” are dramatically shortened to fit limited time frames, thereby eliminating their most important elements. Almost all of the nuances of these experiences—the most basic, significant, and indispensable elements of the culture—are impossible to replicate.

In Canada during the late 1800s, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was also looking for something to attract more tourists and increase profits. Its early advertising was directed at the wealthy upper class of “Britain and Europe, and to a lesser degree, Canada and the United States” (Moir 1986:19), in direct contrast to the efforts of Santa Fe Railway. It is very difficult to imagine that Cornelius Van Horne, CPR’s first general manager, would have been unaware of the dramatic success of the Santa Fe Railway’s advertising campaign focusing on the art and culture of the Southwest Native peoples. Santa Fe’s target audience was the general public from North America who could afford a ticket, not just the wealthy elite. Furthermore, the officials at the CPR initially only highlighted the grandeur of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, not the First Nations peoples, entirely missing the economic potential of Native culture to lure tourists westward. Were the businesses decisions made by the CPR the result of discrimination or a lack of vision?

The fact that Native peoples were not perceived as an economic commodity is illustrated through Lindsay Moir’s short essay on the history of the CPR, in which she only mentions Natives near the end in a three-sentence paragraph about the Banff Indian Days (1986:19-22). What Moir does not say is that the Banff Indian Days only came about by accident: when the floodwaters of 1894 washed out a railway bridge, the CPR brought Natives from the Stoney Reserve to entertain the marooned passengers (Francis 1992:179). And while these events did give birth to the idea of the Banff Indian Days, CPR’s actions were clearly taken to protect its own interests, not to increase knowledge or interest in Canada’s Native people or to knowingly promote the idea of Indian Days. However, even with the gradual

success of the Banff Indian Days, Van Horne did not see the potential of a tourist market involving Natives beyond Banff.

The mountains so impressed Van Horne that he hired a number of highly respected painters—such as Lucius O'Brien, John Fraser, Thomas Mower Martin, and F. M. Bell-Smith—who became known as the “Railway School of Art,” to paint the mountains to the “exclusion of anything else” (Ibid., 178). To help the CPR in its campaign bring Canadian tourists to the Rockies, the Canadian government issued a commemorative stamp in 1928 featuring a scene of Mount Hurd dubbed “the Ice-crowned Monarch of the Rockies,” which was based on a print by Frederic Marlett by Bell-Smith. Interestingly, the stamp is bracketed by the same restored Gitksan house-frontal totem pole named *Spesanish*, meaning “Half-Bear Den,” from Kitwanga. The totem design for the stamp was taken from a photograph by Harlan I. Smith in 1928 at Kitwanga (National Museum of Canada, number 65246) (Barbeau 1950:829-879) (**Figure 14**). In a stamp catalogue by Douglas and Mary Patrick, the stamp design is described as “the natural beauty of Canada and its *folklore*” (1964:56-7, emphasis added).

Francis notes some revealing comments by early British tourists, who naturally had a different perspective than that of the Euro-Canadians with their manifest destiny mind set. For example, in 1891 British tourist Edward Roper was impressed “by the indifference of Canadians who seemed to regard Natives as a race of animals which were neither benefit nor harm to anyone, that they were surely dying out, and when they were all gone it would be a good thing” (Roper 1891:118, 120, 244). According to Francis, “Following the example of their southern

counterparts (the Santa Fe RR), the CPR gradually realized that Indians were a surefire tourist attraction” (1992:179). English writer Douglas Sladen’s observations in 1895 reflect that the CPR had realized that Natives were good for business: “Indians and bears were splendid stage properties to have at the (Banff) station where both the East and West bound trains stop for lunch” (Sladen 1895:306). This reference to and use of Natives and bears in the same light as stage props is certainly a negative and disturbing comment on the times.

The first CPR official to recognize the potential of combining the Native arts and the railway to promote tourism beyond the elite was J. Murry Gibbon, the general publicity agent for the CPR in 1913.⁸⁷ Initially Gibbon concentrated his tourist efforts on hotel construction at key stops along the railroad. He met and worked with Marius Barbeau, a highly regarded anthropologist who began working with the CPR early in his career, on a number of projects over several years, until their falling out in 1943 over Barbeau’s theory that totem poles were not much older than the fur trade (Nowry 1995:345).⁸⁸ As a result of their friendship, the CPR had a dramatic impact on the anthropological study of Gitksan Tsimshian and other coastal peoples.⁸⁹ The CPR allowed anthropologists, other scientists, and artists to

⁸⁷ J. Murry Gibbon, a Scot who came to Canada in 1913 to work for the CNR, was well respected. He had studied art in London and Paris, and was the first president of the Canadian Authors Association (Hill 1995:177). Gibbon approved free transportation and facilities for American artist W. Longdon Kihn and some of the Group of Seven artists to paint in the Gitksan area (Nowry 1995:217). The policy of free transportation would later be expanded to include all phases of the totem pole restoration project of the 1920s.

⁸⁸ Barbeau lost a great deal of credibility over the age of totem poles, something he never fully recovered from.

⁸⁹ It is hard to overstate the importance of the “partnership” between Barbeau, Gibbon and the CNR for Canada and its First Nations People. In my research on the CNR, have been struck by the rare

travel at no cost to their Northwest Coast study areas,⁹⁰ which allowed museums to extend their budgets for much longer field studies. The railroad also directly affected where research was conducted, as much of the work of Marius Barbeau, Harlan I. Smith, George MacDonald and other researchers took place very near the route of the CPR. The CPR also helped promote the business of Native tourism across Canada.

In December 1914, due to an unexpected budget surplus, officials from the Victoria Memorial Museum⁹¹ began three months of fieldwork on the Coastal Tsimshian. It is not clear exactly when the Museum selected Barbeau and fellow anthropologist, Harlan I. Smith⁹² —they traveled to Vancouver by CPR and by boat to Prince Rupert where Barbeau and Gibbon developed a business relationship— but evidence suggests that it occurred before 1920, for it was then that Gibbon arranged for the publication of a 31-page pamphlet for CPR tourists, “Chansons of Old French Canada,” that contained a four-page preface by Barbeau (Nowry 1995:266). Gibbon and Barbeau worked together on a number of mutually profitable projects, such as exhibits and folk music festivals, but most importantly

mention of the CNR and its role in Northwest Coast. Perplexed by this silence, I contacted Tom Murray, writer of *Across Canada* (2011) on the history of Pacific and Canadian National Railroads, who was shocked by his lack of knowledge of the work done by CNR on the Gitksan totem pole. (Personal contact July 15, 2011).

⁹⁰ While their sense of public service was admirable, the travel was often linked to a CPR agenda of attracting tourists, mainly Canadian tourists, to use CPR transportation routes.

⁹¹ This museum was renamed the National Museum of Canada in 1927, the National Museum of Man in 1968, and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1986.

⁹² Harlan I. Smith was an American educator in New York. Lacking university training, he was recruited by the National Museum of Canada in 1911 as a utility man. He was self-taught in the areas of ethnobotany, and was very adept at filmmaking. Eventually he became a staff archaeologist (Nowry 1995:133-4).

the CPR commissioned Barbeau to write *Indian Days in the Canadian Rockies*, published in 1923 (Hill 1995:177).⁹³ The book was illustrated with fifteen portraits of Natives by W. Langdon Kihn, an American painter who became a close friend of Barbeau. Barbeau's agenda at the time was multifaceted: he wanted to promote the Gitksan Tsimshian culture, to develop a national park at Hazelton, and to preserve the totem poles in the Gitksan area.

Charles C. Hill, curator of Canadian art at the National Gallery of Canada, stated erroneously in his book *The Group of Seven Art for a Nation* (1995) that Barbeau spent an undetermined amount of time in the Hazelton area⁹⁴ during his first trip to the west coast.⁹⁵ In actuality Barbeau never ventured inland to Hazelton (Gitenmaks), but he was made privy to information that would consume several years of his life. In Port Simpson, Barbeau's headquarters during his first trip to the

⁹³ Stress on the working relationship between Gibbon and Barbeau began when Gibbon deleted Barbeau's criticisms of missionaries in his book (Nowry 1995:217) and continued until the late 1940s. Barbeau was criticized for defending an earlier belief that the totem pole was a product of the early fur trade. In 1943, Gibbon, in one several exchanges, stated, "You will find it hard to convince many people that this highly developed art sprung into existence virtually overnight" (Ibid., 345). Barbeau's theory has been refuted by the academic community.

⁹⁴ Hill's interest in Barbeau's use of some of the Group of Seven artists for Barbeau's books, especially for *The Downfall of Temlaham* (1928).

⁹⁵ There is confusion as to when Barbeau first went to the Upper Skeena River area of the Gitksan. Charles Hill states that "in 1914 Barbeau visited the villages of Hazelton (Gitenmaks) Hagwilget, Kispayaks, Gitsegyukla, and Kitwanga" (Hill 1995:277). However, Laurence Nowry, Barbeau's biographer, states that Barbeau did not arrive in Port Simpson from Ottawa until December 26, 1914, which would make the trip up the Skeena River physically impossible. Further, he states that "Barbeau restricted his first season in totem pole country to the ethnology of the nine tribes of the Tsimshyn Proper . . . (He) did not go inland" (Ibid., 157). George MacDonald, former director of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, agrees with Lawry, stating that Harlan I. Smith had accompanied Barbeau to the coast, but that Smith was sent to Hazelton, Kitwanga, and Kispiox, and that Barbeau stayed on the coast (1989:26). The geographical area covered by the nine tribes the "Tsimshian Proper" only includes the Coastal Tsimshian "around the mouth of the Skeena" (Jeness 1932:336). To add to the confusion, Barbeau in his memoirs states he was in Port Simpson in 1915-16, not 1914-15. However, his original memoirs were written in French, and the date discrepancy may have resulted from a translation error. The evidence provided by Nowry and MacDonald is most creditable, and their account of the trip is accepted.

Northwest Coast, he learned of the fabled village of the Gitksan people, Temlaham⁹⁶ (Temlaxham), a “Native Garden of Eden on the banks of Skeena” (Barbeau 1928: vi-viii). Barbeau’s early estimation of the distance between the mythical town and the town of Hazelton, as stated in a letter to J. B. Harkin in the spring of 1924, was that “Temlaham (is) less than a mile from the town (of Hazelton) ...” ([CMC] correspondence, Barbeau to Harkin, J. B., B202 F.22). However, anthropologist, Diamond Jenness, who would become a close friend of Barbeau’s, had made several research trips to the Upper Skeena River in Gitksan territory and placed “Temlaham at the Gitksan Dam at Mosquito Flat about 15 km east of Hazelton on the Bulkey (River)” (Nowry 1995:208). Researcher Jay Miller also looked into the Tsimshian *Adaawk*,⁹⁷ stating that Gitksan created sacred myths, songs and dances, and composed all the important crests while at the Prairie town (Temlaham). And Sterritt et al. argued “Temlaxam refers to both a specific village, and a general area in which there were a number of villages. Temlaxham is said to have stretched from Kispiox to Gitsegyukla” (1997:16-24).⁹⁸ My research on the location of this region shows that this larger area is more in keeping with Barbeau’s general view of the limits of Temlaham. The research has further shown that he was fascinated, perhaps obsessed, with the concepts of Temlaham, which spurred his research on the Gitksan and his ongoing efforts to establish a national park.

⁹⁶ Temlaham is also referred to as Prairie Town (Miller and Eastman 1984: xiii; Seguin 1984:39).

⁹⁷ The legal definition of the *Adaawk* is defined by “Delgamuukw vs. British Columbia.” The decision by the Supreme Court of Canada (Persky, S. 1998).

⁹⁸ Sterritt, et al.’s *Tribal Boundaries in the Nass Watershed* (1998) was originally part of the legal negotiations between the land claims of the Gitksan and Nisga’a.

While there is no evidence that the village was anything but myth, it is extremely important to the Tsimshian and to this study. Temlaham is the most important of the Tsimshian *Adaawk* myths, almost all Tsimshian crests, the heart and sole of Tsimshian culture, originated in the sacred oral myths of Temlaham (Miller 1997:57). As Miller states, it is the place where the Tsimshian first became aware of themselves as a people (Miller and Eastman 1984:39). Barbeau believed Temlaham was

a sort Paradise Lost of the Indians ... [Its] myth and literary quality impressed me so greatly that I craved for finding a way of expressing it and commemorating it. [Upon returning to Ottawa] I got in touch with the Canadian National Railway people in Montreal, Publicity Department, Sir Henry Thornton, and I wanted them to create a new national park in that [Hazelton] neighborhood, where they could have erected a hotel and make it something like the Banff Hotel. They had it in a barren country there in Alberta, whereas this was a peopled country, far more interesting ([CMC] Carmen Roy coll. [Acq 2002-F003] *Les mémoires de Marius Barbeau/ memoirs, Folder: Textual transcriptions from the interview, (Reel 109), 1957- [1958], Box:622 f.3*).

Barbeau returned to Tsimshian territory in 1920 and went directly to Hazelton⁹⁹ to establish a center for his research. While his fascination with Temlaham and the Gitksan was one reason for this choice of location, another was that he was traveling with his wife Marie and their six-month old daughter and knew he would be traveling away from home for several days at a time, as the Gitksan area was huge. A cousin of Barbeau's was married to R. S. Sargent, whose family was prominent in the small community of Hazelton. They owned a store,

⁹⁹ The small modern village of Hazelton is the traditional home of the Gitksan; New Hazelton, also small, is approximately ten kilometers from Hazelton.

hotel, and lounge,¹⁰⁰ and for a period of time, Sargent was postmaster. It seems very clear that Barbeau was a family man, and there can be little doubt that his cousin Emily would have been a help to Marie and the baby. It is also clear that Barbeau was close to his cousin. Sally McMilliam, Polly Sargent's eldest daughter, recalls that her grandmother, Emily (Barbeau) Sargent, Barbeau's cousin, had a close relationship with Marius Barbeau. "Granny had lots of his museum monographs [which were inscribed], 'To dear cousin Emily, from Marius' . . . My mother (Polly) read all his books." Whenever he was in town he would stay with Emily (Interview, B. Coleman July 26, 2003; interview, S. McMillan July 27, 2003).

Barbeau began his 1920 fieldwork by attending totem pole raising potlatches¹⁰¹ at nearby Carrier villages and a funeral potlatch at Hagwelgate, also a Carrier village (Nowry 1995:197). The poles were commissioned from Gitksan carvers, suggesting that the Gitksan carvers were *Gitsontk* artists. Barbeau had been very interested in the potlatch since his days at Oxford, and he clearly supported the Native right to hold the potlatch, stating, "the [potlatch] law is not obeyed in the regions I have visited [among the Gitksan and Carrier peoples] and that, to my mind, rightly so" (Ibid., 196).

During the field seasons of 1920 and 1923, Barbeau seems to have spent most of his time among the Gitksan. Extremely adept at conveying his support and understanding of the problems of the Gitksan, he made a most favorable impression

¹⁰⁰ Sargent, who came to Hazelton in 1891 was originally an employee of the Hudson Bay Company (HBC), he quit HBC "in opposition" and opened his own store. In 1911 he married Emily Barbeau, from Prince Rupert (Large 1996:55).

¹⁰¹ Potlatches were prohibited at this time.

on both the non-Native and Native communities. Diamond Jeness wrote to him in 1923: “I have not found a single man yet whose face did not light up when I mentioned your name, Indian or white. Your stay here has smoothed my path immensely, and everyone welcomes me because I am a friend of Mr. Barbeau” (Ibid.). Barbeau’s ability to get along with Natives and non-Natives was crucial to the success of his research among the Gitksan and his plan for a National Park.

The pressure to collect totem poles from the Northwest Coast began in 1876. The law against potlatching meant that new totem poles were extremely rare, as coastal Native cultures required a potlatch to raise a pole. It was also customary that old totem poles were not replaced. Christianity conversion required that standing poles be destroyed by burning or by cutting them down. While all of these factors affected the endangerment of the totem poles of British Columbia, the main reason was private¹⁰² and museum purchases. Many of the poles had gone to museums outside of Canada, in particular the US (Cole 1985:29). While a number of older Haida poles remained in abandoned villages on the Queen Charlotte Islands,¹⁰³ the poles of the Gitksan along the Upper Skeena River attracted the most tourist attention of the CNR during the early 1920s, as the railways followed the course of the river across from the Gitksan village. The Canadian press berated both the public and the government for ignoring America’s theft of Canadian’s Native heritage. Public organizations such as the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of

¹⁰² The actions of pole collectors were sometimes morally questionable. The most infamous incident was the removal of a group of poles from Alert Bay by unnamed individuals, who allegedly had plied their Native owners with drink (Darling and Cole 1980:30).

¹⁰³ The Queen Charlotte Islands, the ancestral and current home of the Haida people, are known collectively by the Haida as “Haida Gwaii.”

Canada and the Royal Society of Canada lobbied the government to prohibit the sale or export of historical poles (Thornton 1950:3; Darling and Cole 1980:30; Cole 1985:91-2; Hawker 2003:49).¹⁰⁴ An amendment to the Indian Act to protect the totem poles was passed, but it had many loopholes. Indian Affairs policy maintained, for example, that if Canadian museums could not afford to buy poles, “they should be allowed to be sold abroad” (Cole 1985:278). A letter from Barbeau to C. K. Howard, General Passenger and Tourist Department of the CNR, on November 6, 1929 illustrates the weakness of both the policy and the Indian Act amendment. In it, Barbeau tried to get special treatment for transportation costs for totem poles he had acquired for Canadian and Scotland museums and for the Hotel Scribe, Paris France. Three of these poles went to the CNR ([CMC] Barbeau correspondence, Howard, C. K. folder, B204 f.70).¹⁰⁵

While I have not found an official reason for the lack of interest shown by the Canadian government and the public in the loss of the totem poles to America and Europe, I have two interlocking theories. First, the great distance between the coast of British Columbia and Ottawa made it much more convenient for the federal government to leave the administrative duties to the provincial government. Second, the totem pole issue was problematic because of the potlatch law of the 1880s: the federal government, although clearly dedicated to dismantling the

¹⁰⁴ Hawker, in his book *Tales of Ghosts*, states that Charles Stewart, Commissioner of the Department of the Interior, in response to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s plea for totem pole preservation, note that “it is true that prohibiting [totem pole] export destroys the Indians best market.” Sensitivity to Indian artists’ livelihood was rare (2003:49).

¹⁰⁵ Barbeau knew of the loopholes, but he kept his collecting activities from public knowledge. The statement by R. E. Gosnell, a reporter for the *Daily Colonist*, that “What Mr. Barbeau collects, of course, comes to Ottawa” (March 26, 1925)—which was certainly not true.

Native culture, found itself in the ethical dilemma of forbidding Natives to make or maintain totem poles while at the same time allowing the poles to be sold to domestic and foreign buyers. Put simply, totem poles were a problem for the government that they wished would go away. An incident involving A. Y. Jackson, a well-known member of Canada's Group of Seven, provides a perfect illustration; Jackson and Edwin Holgate, also of the Group of Seven, traveled to the Upper Skeena and Nass River territory to paint the Gitksan and the Nisga'a people. In the late 1920s, the two artists contacted the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) about bringing back two large totem poles for the museum.

The number of poles lost to religious pressure began to subside after around 1910; however, as the standing poles became older, the number lost to the natural elements of wind, rain, and snow rose alarmingly. A growing concern was that if totem poles were not preserved and new poles were not carved and raised, the only totem poles left in Canada would be those already in museums and private collections. Exacerbating the problem was the dwindling of the traditional cultural memory needed to create the complex iconographic formline images of northern Northwest Coast art. The transfer of knowledge required for the artists to develop the art form, or even for an understanding of the symbolic meanings the art spoke to, were largely gone. The art "schools" that existed before contact—most importantly, the secret *gitsontk* societies, artists, and apprentices who were entrusted with all things cultural—were legislated out of existence (Connerton 1989:41-71). The irony of this deliberate conservation of existing totem poles did not escape the Gitksan, who "asked why a government which a few years earlier had

banned the erection of new poles, now wanted to preserve old ones” (Francis 1992:184). The answer to this question might come from artist Emily Carr, who stated that there was “too much catering to the beastly tourist ” ([CMC] Carr correspondence to Eric Brown 11 August 1920), a belief shared by a number of other Canadians.

The Gitksan did not give up their totem poles easily. In 1936 a flood washed many of the totem poles of the Gitksan villages into the Skeena River. While some poles were lost, many of the remaining poles were restored and re-erected by the Gitksan people in 1943, 1944, and 1945. These raisings were preceded by potlatches, even though it was still unlawful to hold them. William Beynon (1888-1958), a Tsimshian chief of the Gitksan people and ethnographer who worked and trained with Marius Barbeau, attended and participated in five of the 1945 potlatches at Gitsegukla. Beynon took extensive notes based on his observations, and recorded a controversy between traditional tribal elders and the young Gitksan chiefs on how the potlatch should be performed, noting, “The younger chiefs . . . wanted to do everything in a modern way” (Beynon 1945, vol. 1, p. 1-4; Anderson and Halpin 2000:55-6). They would do away with traditional regalia, and replace the traditional dancing with modern dancing. The younger wanted to move past “the remnants of the older thought” (Anderson and Halpin 2000:55-6), while the elders stressed that potlatches were more than pole raisings and that the display of the *naxnox*s were to be dramatized (in dance) and song (Ibid.). Ignoring the young men all together, the elders mad arrangements for their own potlatch, commissioning three new poles, one by Tom Campbell of Hazelton, and two

reconditioned poles by Arthur McDames (Ibid.). The chastened younger chiefs gave up their avant-garde aspirations (Ibid., 55-6). Beynon, when comparing the two older restored poles that were re-erected with the three new poles, noted that the new poles revealed “an obvious loss of carving skills” (Ibid., 40). Beynon’s notes very thoroughly recorded the information on the totem poles raised in the 1945 potlatches. For example, he verified the origin of four out of five poles by their *Adaox* (oral traditions), tracing them directly to Temlaxam. The *Adaox* of one pole—*T’xagwetk’u’nuks* (All Owls), *T’sa’wals’*—may give historical creditability to oral traditions that housefront paintings preceded totem poles as crest-bearing *dzepek’* (Ibid., 43).

In 1920 Barbeau began his landmark study of Gitksan totem poles, spending the entire field season in the Upper Skeena. However, in an interesting move—considering his fascination with Temlaham, the potlatch, and totem poles—he chose to use his budget to do other research and writing projects in the French speaking areas of Canada for the next two years. He did not return to the Skeena until 1923 (Nowry 1995:398), when he and Smith, writing separately to their superiors, suggested that totem poles on the Skeena along the CN railway should be preserved in situ. These separate reports suggest a rift between the two men, and the precise area that each man preferred to work is important to this study. Smith, in communication with Edward Sapir, chief at the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa, was most interested in the totem poles at Kitwanga, within sight of the railway. Barbeau, in a report to Diamond Jenness, stated that he was interested in all the poles of the Gitksan east of Kitwanga.

It was in this report that Barbeau first mentions that the Federal Parks Branch gave consideration to the restoration of the old totem poles. Using the report, Barbeau was able to stimulate the interest of J. B. Harkin of the Canadian National Parks in the idea of an Indian National Park at Temlaham. Barbeau also suggested that CNR do the same (Darling and Cole 1980:31). I argue that Barbeau, knowing the considerable financial cost and political support required for the development of such a park, realized that the support of the CNR was critical. In addition to providing a framework for the preservation of totem poles, "Barbeau also started stirring up local interest in the tourist park. Jenness, an early supporter, also kept the proposal alive during his stay in Hazelton from October 1923 to March, 1924" (Nowry 1995:215).

Initially Smith was left out of the official planning for the restoration project. Charles Camsell, Deputy Minister of Mines, took charge in June 1924, and appointed a totem pole preservation committee of representatives from the Department of Indian Affairs, Federal Parks Branch, and the National Museum of Man, including Barbeau. Barbeau was immediately sent to the Gitksan to take a full inventory of the totem poles and grave houses, to suggest the best means to preserve the poles, and to recommend the best location to start the restoration work. He finished the projects he started in 1923, and worked through the fall on the pole survey. Barbeau left for Ottawa in late November, where he began his report to the committee, "Report on the Totem Poles of the Upper Skeena and Their Contemplated Conservation," which he turned in on January 20, 1925. Barbeau proposed a sequence of villages to restore based on his knowledge of the

communities; that proposal was ignored by the committee (Jonaitis and Glass 2010:85-90). However, the committee unanimously accepted the report and directed that the work begin later in the year. Much to Barbeau's surprise, the committee mandated that the Victoria Memorial Museum was to provide the services of Smith, who would be liaison officer with the Gitksan and in charge of the field operations. This left no role for Barbeau.¹⁰⁶

Actual restoration work began at Kitwanga on June 1, 1925 (**figure 15**). Progress was slow but steady for that year, but in 1926 the first serious problem arose. Shortly after work started, Chief Semideck at Kitawanga refused to allow Smith to restore his two poles. When Smith arrived at Kitsegukla at the beginning of the 1926 work season, Joe Brown, representing the Kitsegukla chiefs, told Smith not to touch any poles, and to remove his equipment by the next morning (Darling and Cole 1980:38). At the end of the 1926 field season, Tom Campbell, a Gitksan totem carver from Hazelton, told Smith not to touch his poles, and Campbell's rebuff of Smith influenced the other totem pole owners to follow suit. The effect of the decision to drop Barbeau, who had developed a strong relationship with the Gitksan, combined with Smith's inability to work cooperatively with the Gitksan, had taken its toll.

Nonetheless, in December 1926 Smith sent a seven-page report to Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, stating that he helped Pathé Motion Pictures with promotional film advertising the CNR as "the

¹⁰⁶ *A World Inside: A 150-Year History of the Canadian Museum of Civilization* (Vodden and Dyck 2006) presents the totem pole restoration period as a successful project solely of Harlan Smith, with no mention of Barbeau (Ibid., 37).

Railway to Totem Pole Land” (Ibid., 37-8). He also offered several marketing suggestions, perhaps borrowing on the successful advertising methods of the Santa Fe Railway, for example, offering objects of interest (e.g. Indian jewelry or plaster-cast replicas of totem poles) for sale to tourists.¹⁰⁷ In spite of this report, the situation for Smith continued to worsen. In a separate report, Smith submitted a long list of Indian grievances, “some no doubt real, some imaginary” (Ibid., 39). While the report ends stating, “most of the difficulties were happily overcome,” this was clearly not the case.

The situation between Smith and the Gitksan continued to deteriorate (Ibid.). Smith believed he should have “absolute field control to be able to sidestep [the Indians] and do things on one seconds notice” (Ibid., 42). He resented having to get permission in dealing with the Natives over their totem poles. On May 8, 1927, he started the field season by cutting down a pole in Kitseuklas. The Natives reacted immediately by presenting him with a petition of protest, and then hired a lawyer¹⁰⁸ to protest Smith’s actions to Duncan Campbell Scott, administrator of the Indian Affairs Department. Smith also had problems with Barbeau, who reported to Scott that Smith’s work for the 1927 field season was “wasted” (Ibid., 40). Finally recognizing there was a problem, Smith would later state, “I was never quite sure if I was on the totem pole committee, or only a prisoner of it” (Ibid., 42). At the end of

¹⁰⁷ Leslie Dawn suggests that Smith might have been inspired by a trip to Santa Fe (2006:204). Unfortunately, he did not provide a reference, and I could not find evidence to support his claim.

¹⁰⁸ This may be the first time the Gitksan resorted to the hiring of a lawyer to fight for Native legal rights in matters surrounding traditionalism and totem poles.

1927 season, Smith quit the project, and it was taken over by the CNR engineer, T. B. Campbell, with very little progress achieved. By 1930, the first totem pole restoration project on the Northwest Coast was abandoned.

When the restoration project failed, so too did any serious effort to revive CNR's attempt to capitalize on its slogan, "The railway to totem pole land."¹⁰⁹ Researchers often cite many and complex problems to explain the difference between the CNR and the wildly successful Santa Fe Railroad tourist industry, but I believe it can be summed up as CNR's lack of appropriate destination of significance to Native communities and lack of future planning. The sole focus of CNR's tourist campaign was the totem poles of the Gitksan Tsimshian. However, because the train was on one side of the Skeena River and most the poles were on the other side, the poles were not the destination at all, but just part of the scenery (**figure 16**). Furthermore, not only were there very few poles, but, as pointed out Wilson Duff (1952:11) and many others, the quality of Northwest Coast totem carvers had diminished in general, and specifically among the Gitksan.

Totem poles were not meant to be objects of art. But after the 1897 publication of Franz Boas' *(The) Decorative Art of Indians of (the) North Pacific Coast*, the Western world slowly began to see the creative works by the Northwest Coast carvers, weavers, etc., not only as art, but as fine art. Most of the poles that were renovated or newly carved in the 1920s, however, would not have been classified as

¹⁰⁹ In researching the CNR's involvement with the totem pole restoration from their perspective, my calls to the railroad uncovered no history whatsoever. I also contacted Tom Murray, well known Canadian railroad historian, who stated he had never heard of "The Railway to Totem Pole Land" (interview July 15, 2011).

“fine” art. From the CNR’s perspective, the totem poles were primarily specimens of an ancient people with a financial potential. The quality of the railroad poles was “irrelevant—indeed, the cruder the carving, the more ‘authentic’ it appeared to the tourist gaze” (Anderson and Halpin 2000:40). Of course, the issue of quality by the tourist on the subject of Northwest Coast Native art is basically a problem of ignorance, and it continues today. Ironically, Barbeau’s stubborn defensive stance that totem poles originated as “a by-product of the fur trade” (Norwry 1995:345-47) proves that even experts can be very wrong.

Although he was interested in a totem pole tourist experience, Barbeau’s major professional interest was still Temlaham. He “craved [to find] a way to express and commemorate . . . the myth of Temlaham” ([CMC] Carmen Roy coll. [Acq 2002-F003] *Les mémoires de Marius Barbeau/ memoirs, Folder: Textual transcriptions from the interview, (Reel 109), 1957-[1958], Box:622 f.3*). As time passed, Barbeau clearly became more obsessed with the myth, seeing this special place as “his Tsimshian.” Most importantly, we know that Barbeau, who refers to himself in the third person, wrote the memorandum (with assistance from Miss Mabel Williams)¹¹⁰ and prepared and submitted a petition in 1924 on behalf of the residents of Hazelton, to Mr. J. B. Harkin, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs for a National Park and game reserve to be established in the neighborhood of Hazelton. Due to its length (12 pages of petition, and 10 pages of material

¹¹⁰ Little is known about Mable Williams other than she is listed along with Diamond Jenness as reader of certain narratives as and offering useful suggestions for the book, *The Downfall of Temlaham* (1928:viii).

supporting the historical significance of the Hazelton area), I will only include here material relevant to my study (see **Appendix A** for complete text). As we shall see, this material would later become critical to the renewal of Gitksan art and culture through the tourist village of 'Ksan and the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art.

Initially the proposal did create interest at the highest levels of the CNR. In the summer of 1924, CNR President Henry Parks Thornton visited Gitksan territory with several senior national parks staff to assess the tourist potential and viability of Barbeau's proposal (Dyck 2008:319). While several references in the literature chronicle the failure of Barbeau's dream, none of them provide a reason why it failed, nor can any evidence be found that Barbeau accompanied Thornton on the fact-finding trip. It is hard to imagine that Barbeau did not know about the trip, but if he did know and yet failed to see that it should be a priority to accompany Thornton, this could have been perceived as a lack of interest and may have contributed to his failure.

However, I suggest a reason for the failure. In March 1925, Barbeau, with artist Langdon Kihn, gave an address to a large number of members from the House of Commons and the Senate in Ottawa. The lecture was on Barbeau's proposal for the Temlaham National Park. Kihn's role in the presentation was to exhibit 65 of his art works to show the beauty of the region. Mr. R. E. Gosnell, a newspaper reporter with the *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, B.C.) gave an account of the lecture in his article, "B. C. Indian Lore Interests Ottawa" (1925). The lecture had a very practical application. Taking the great success of the development of the national parks in

southern British Columbia and their effects in promoting tourist trade, he (Barbeau) advocated establishment of the Temlaham National Park in north central British Columbia, which he believed would have a similar result. However, Gosnell points out,

... there is just one difficulty with the proposal, and that is that the lands in northern B.C. belong to the provincial government whereas the existing national parks have been carved out of railway lands. It ought to be practical to make a working arrangement with the Dominion government for the purpose in question without affecting our sovereign rights in the soil and natural resources. (March 26, 1925, *The Daily colonist*, Victoria, B.C.).¹¹¹

While Barbeau was lobbying everyone in Dominion government he could think of, provincial authorities were at the same time arresting “potlatchers” and vowing to destroy Native culture and the totem pole—the very same totem poles Barbeau was trying to protect by establishing the park. It is entirely possible that there just was not enough support in the House of Commons or the Senate. Perhaps Barbeau’s later sporadic efforts to resurrect the proposal were little more than wishful thinking, and the proposal died.

Although the petition was, I believe, a sincere plea for his mythic site of Temlaham, Barbeau only worked periodically to establish the Park, at times inserting it into official correspondence. His “Report on the Totem Poles of the Upper Skeena and Their Contemplated Conversation” to Deputy Minister of Mines Charles Camsell on January 20, 1925, for example, was not merely a report on totem poles, but a promotion for the Park (Lowry 1995:221).

¹¹¹ The provincial and Dominion governments at that time were basically independent from each other.

In 1927 Barbeau wrote to C. K. Howard, CNR General Tourist Agent, to ask the CNR to purchase some of Langdon Kihn's paintings, hoping, "It may still have further influence in bringing about the establishment of an Indian National Park on the Upper Skeena" ([CMC] Correspondence Barbeau to C. K. Howard, June 10, 1927, box 18). Barbeau's used four of these paintings by Kihn in his fictional book, *The Downfall of Temlaham* (**figure 17**), three by A. Y. Jackson, four by Edwain H. Holgate, and one each by Emily Carr and Anne Savage (**figure 18**).

The use of the paintings, in color by Emily Carr and members of the Group of Seven was a great idea in the area of anthropological fiction, certainly during the 1920s. The early use of color was very expensive, and not proven to be part of the book buying public's habits. Barbeau and his publisher, Macmillan Company of Canada Limited (1928), took a big chance, both financially and especially for Barbeau, professionally. The most prominent of the early Northwest Coast scholars were Franz Boas and Marius Barbeau. Both were prolific writers, but only Barbeau wrote fiction, and only Barbeau used artists. Barbeau observed "A photograph is maybe an interesting thing, especially when you come to the art of the Indians. You want to see their work in carving as it is, masks or totems; but when you have the interpretation of an artist, it's enhanced. It has a living quality that you can't find elsewhere, especially if you have good artists. Their work adds very much to the flat value of the photograph of the same thing" (Nowry 1995:220). And Barbeau wisely selected great artists "Their contribution was important and interesting, inspiring; (they had) totem poles, Indians, the country, the mountains; and I enjoyed their company" (Ibid).

The Downfall of Temlaham was a mix of fact, oral history, legend, and descriptions of authentic tribal customs, but especially it was great story telling, not from a scholarly viewpoint, but for the popular mainstream fiction. It was extremely well received, winning the *Grand Prix litteraire de la province du Quebec* in 1929 (Nowry 1995:267). As Dyck points out, Barbeau used written descriptors such as “mystical, unspoiled, primal, romantic, seductive, and authentic” to describe the Gitksan and the Greater Temlaham territory (Dyck 2008:318).

In 1942, Emily Carr wrote a note to Barbeau saying the book was “simply splendid ... thank you for having written the book. Thank you for myself, and Canada and for the Indian” (Nowry 1995:281-82). The biggest single marketing tool for the Park had been publication of Barbeau’s book, which originally was to coincide with the official announcement of the Park. It did not happen. The book, as well received as it was, did not change minds. When Barbeau wanted to add more illustrations to the book, Hugh Ayers of Macmillan Publication and Barbeau needed money for the color plates. Ayers reasoned that because “the book bears on your project on making Temlaham along the Skeena River a National Park, [and because] the CNR shows interest, let us go to Montreal and see Sir Henry Thornton ... for support” ([RBCM] Ayers to Barbeau, no date). They received the funds needed, but it did not go beyond the book. The Park would never materialize.¹¹² Barbeau would later state that Temlaham “was a dream. It never was to be realized. But I went on with my Temlaham ... As for the ‘Downfall of Temlaham,’ the book I was planning,

¹¹² While Barbeau never achieved his dream of the Park, the highest mountain in the Arctic was named in his honor. “Barbeau Peak” (2,604m/ 8,541ft) is on Ellesmere Island, near the North Pole (Nowry 1995:422).

well that was sheer heresy. Anthropology could not be expressed in a literary way as I wanted to do. I quite agreed to do that, but I wanted to do a book on the side” ([CMC] Carmen Roy coll. [Acq 2002-F003] *Les mémoires de Marius Barbeau/memoirs*, Folder: Textual transcriptions from the interview, (Reel 109), 1957-[1958], Box:622 f.3).

I suggest that Barbeau may have felt that way in retrospect, but the publishing date, the use of artists, the use of costly reproductions of 13 full color plates, and interestingly, an appendix of “sources of information” does not lend credibility to something he just “wanted to do a book on the side” (Ibid).

The book was published in 1928 with a production run of 2500 copies. In 1973, a second edition with an introduction by George C. Clutesi was published by Hurtig Publishers. However, in spite of the popularity of *The Downfall of Temlaham* and all of his many publications, and the enormous respect he had gained in the early years of his work, in the end interest in the Park waned and Barbeau’s dream failed. An exhaustive literature search reveals no analysis of the factors leading to the failure of the CNR tourist campaign; it just seems to have faded away. The restoration project was not the economic boon originally hoped for and there were too many problems between the main players: among Barbeau and Smith and the local government agencies, and specifically, I believe, between the dominion of Canada and the provincial government of British Columbia. Without the Park as a tourist destination, it seemed there was nothing for the CNR to build on, to lobby for. Although the CNR was the key to the success of the park, I could find no evidence

that Barbeau realized the true importance of the railroad, nor could I find evidence that Barbeau gave much effort to lobbying for the project.

Other reasons for the failure are complex: some facts in Nowry's biography of Marius Barbeau *Man of Mana* (1995) lead me to posit that Barbeau's many unrelated interests were so time consuming that he was often unable to give any one area the attention it required. For example, in 1924 the Royal Ontario Museum gave Barbeau 5,000 dollars, a great deal of money at the time, to collect for them. Upon learning this, his supervisors, William McInnes and Edward Sapir, informed him that it was inadvisable to collect such large amounts as it would take too much of his time. Even more notable was his decision to use his 1925 budget to research his French Canadian interests, instead of continuing his focus on the Northwest Coast (Nowry 1995:218-19, 222). These two examples reveal lost opportunities in his quest for a national park. This characteristic, coupled with an inflated sense of self and stubbornness, was in the end self-defeating. His refusal to re-consider his position on the date and origin of totem poles resulted in great criticism by many scholars, especially in his later years, in spite of the contributions of his other research, especially his work on the Park.

In chapter three, I will show that another dreamer, Margaret (Polly) Sargent, almost certainly used Barbeau's plans for the concept of 'Ksan, which included the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art and tourist efforts in other Gitksan villages as outlined in the national park plan.

CHAPTER 3: THE SHIFT FROM GITKSAN TOTEM POLE RESTORATION TO THE RENEWAL OF GITKSAN ART: THE SKEENA TREASURE HOUSE AS THE MODEL FOR 'KSAN

In chapter two we saw the fading of Marius Barbeau's dream for the Temlaham National Park; but he had not given up. In this chapter I will discuss his continued hopes of support for the park through his development of the 1927 exhibition, *Canadian West Coast Art—Native and Modern*.¹¹³ The exhibition was first suggested as a small showing of Gitksan masks by friend and painter A. Y. Jackson, a Group of Seven artist who had gone to Gitksan territory to paint. Barbeau seized on the exhibition as a vehicle to resurrect his plan for the National Park. Due to Barbeau's connections with the Gitksan meant that he access to borrowing their art, and the small exhibition quickly grew in scope and importance. Eric Brown, then director of the National Gallery of Canada and a major advocate of the exhibition, was to provide support for the "modern" section of the exhibition.

While the CNR was busy promoting Gitksan totem poles and the location of Gitksan as a Native art destination that went beyond totem poles, Barbeau was busy in Ottawa developing the 1927 exhibition mentioned at the opening of this chapter: *Canadian West Coast Art—Native and Modern*. Barbeau was dedicated to find support for the exhibition. As described above, the CNR gave Barbeau almost total support for his work beginning from the early years in the east (1911) and,

¹¹³ A small 16-page catalogue was published with exhibition with a short preface by Eric Brown, president and director of the National Gallery of Canada, and an introduction by Barbeau. Emily Carr designed the cover, using her Indian name, *Klee Wyck* (Laughing One). The exhibition included 26 paintings by Carr, mostly of Gitksan scenes, as well as pottery, rugs and small items, all decorated with Gitksan designs. More information about the exhibition, see Morrison 1991, Nemiroff 1992, Jessup 2002.

especially, on the Northwest Coast. Barbeau was a master at combining several agendas, trying to meet the aims of the CNR without causing animosity among the Gitksan. In May of 1927, a letter to C. K. Howard, supervisor of the General Passenger and Tourist Department, Barbeau requested free transportation for artists Florence Wyle and Ann Savage so they could create art for the exhibition. Not one to miss an opportunity, Barbeau ends his letter saying that free passage “would be sufficient inducement for them to take up work on the Skeena and help us carry out our campaign (sic) of publicity in favor of establishment of an Indian National Park in that country” ([CMC] Barbeau to Howard, C.K., May 31, 1927, CMC folder Howard, C.K. [1924-1927] B204, F.70). As this document indicates, Barbeau never had singular motives. He had several agendas for the exhibition, for example, and was very selective about which agenda he would share with potential supporters. For example, he wrote to Vincent Massey, then Toronto Art Gallery trustee,¹¹⁴ that the exhibition would “act as a stimulus toward the discovery of one of the most valuable artistic fields we have in Canada” ([CMC] Barbeau correspondence to Massey 30 December 19, 1926), but when seeking assistance from the CPR, he always promoted the commercial aspects of the area and downplayed the value of Native art.

Another agenda of Barbeau’s for the exhibition was, according to A. Y. Jackson, to highlight the work of Emily Carr: “It was Marius Barbeau who called attention to Emily Carr and her work when he organized the exhibition of West

¹¹⁴ Massey would go on to be Chancellor of the University of Toronto and Chairman of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-1951), better known as the Massey Commission, which produced the Massey Report in 1951.

Coast art for the National Gallery. She was invited to send a number of her canvases and a railway pass was secured for her so that she might attend the exhibition. She had many friends and admirers after that time” (Jackson 1958:91-2). While the Group of Seven helped the Gitksan to attain celebrity for its art and culture, it was Emily Carr who brought consistent attention to the Gitksan through holding several exhibitions at ‘Ksan. In a personal interview, Laurel Mould suggested, “Carr’s presence here was very important in the beginning of ‘Ksan because it helped bring credibility to the entire concept”¹¹⁵ (Laurel Mould interview July 20, 2002).

I believe Barbeau had a genuine respect for Native art in a general sense, but he was an ethnologist and he pursued a research regimen within the boundaries of the discipline at that time. Many of his publications on the Northwest Coast cultures of Haida and Tsimshian were devoted to or contained a strong focus on North American Native mythology, oral history, and music, rather than visual culture. However, in some of his lectures, he would make comments that were daring for the time: for example, stating, “the only form of art that can be called Canadian is that of the west coast tribes” ([CMC] Excerpt from a lecture, Barbeau collection, Northwest Coast files, B. 33, f -1 lectures on the Ethnology of British Columbia [1926-27] [B-F-527]). It was comments like this that helped bring Northwest Coast art into the realm of fine art.

It is important to briefly analyze the differences between Barbeau and his friend and sometime colleague, Franz Boas, on the subject of art. Barbeau’s interest

¹¹⁵ While ‘Ksan did feature Carr’s work several times in exhibitions, exposure was limited because of its remote location.

in the art of the Northwest Coast Native did not approach the same depth of knowledge that we can see in the work of Franz Boas. Boas demonstrated his ideas on art in a two-page article, "Decorative Art of the Indians of the North Pacific Coast," published in *Science* in 1896. His first major publication on Northwest Coast art, of the same title, came out in 1897, and a much later expanded discourse on the same subject, again with the same title, was published in the bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History. In 1927 he wrote *Primitive Art*, a revision of the 1897 essay, which dealt primarily with art forms. In a discussion assessing Boas' influence on Northwest Coast art scholarship, Carol Sheehan McClaren states that Boas was committed to "historical-particularism," an anthropological tradition, which led to a major flaw in Boas' approach to the study of art. Specifically, she states that he "separated ideas from things" (1978:66-7). However, she herself failed to acknowledge, "Boas himself frequently recognized the possibility of ambiguity in imagery" (Jonaitis 1995:325). For example, Boas stated, "it is essential to bear in mind the twofold source of artistic effect, the one based on form alone, the other on ideas associated with form" (1927:13). However, Boas did "challenge" the notion that all Northwest Coast art was totemic by identifying certain objects whose animal form did not derive from social meaning" (Jonaitis 1995:12). It is clear that Boas was uncomfortable with the subject of meaning; it was "his recurrent theme that uncomplicated answers to questions of meaning simply did not exist" (Ibid.). This is an important aspect of Boas' work that differed from Barbeau. Boas always asked his collectors in the field to get the stories about items they acquired. His focus on formal element was ideological (Ibid., 30-36).

Noted Northwest Coast scholar Aldona Jonaitis, in her seminal work on Boas and his legacy in Northwest Coast art studies, characterizes Boas's "work in four major areas of art history—iconographic, formal, historical, and psychological, but particularly nothing on the meaning of the forms beyond identification of forms such as bear, frog, etc." (Ibid., 306). There is one important exception. In his 1890 publication, "The Use of Masks and Head Ornaments on the Northwest Coast of America," he "briefly discusses the difficulty of obtaining information on the meaning of Northwest Coast art" (Ibid., 42). I suspect that as a result of this "negative" first encounter early in his career on the meaning of the art, he convinced himself to spend his time on more "rewarding" research—such as form and his belief in the related aesthetic pleasure of form. Douglas Fraser describes Boas's research preferences as "distaste for the subjective or chancy side of art" (1966:3), but it would be a mistake to assume Boas was not interested in mythology. He published three major works on Tsimshian mythology.¹¹⁶

Barbeau approached Northwest Coast art much differently than Boas, who was much more interested in form; but it would be a mistake to disassociate Boas

¹¹⁶ Boas did work among the Tsimshian. In 1902 he published *Tsimshian Texts*, introducing it as a collection of myths that he did not collect but translated. Significant to the research on 'Ksan, these myths were exclusively Nisga'a and were "only moderately well told ... based on 'similar myths I collected in previous years among the Tsimshian proper [Coastal Tsimshian]" (1902:5). In 1916 he published *Tsimshian Mythology*. (However, this 31st Annual Report to the Bureau of American Ethnology is published as the Report of 1909-1910). In the preface, he lists several reasons why the myths are not accurate, for example, the main collector, Henry Tate, a Tsimshian from the coastal area around Port Simpson, "felt it incumbent to omit some of the traits of his people that would seem inappropriate to us . . . [that the] tales do not express this old type of Tsimshian traditions." Furthermore, he writes that he was "indebted to C. M. Barbeau for the phonetic equivalents of some of the Tsimshian names used by Mr. Tate" (1916:31-2). The *Tsimshian Mythology* runs 1031 pages, but as with *Tsimshian Texts*, he is defensive about his work: "I presume I shall be accused of an entire lack of imagination and of failure to realize the power of the primitive mind if I insist that the attempt to interpret mythology as a direct reflex of the contemplation of nature is not sustained by the facts ... it seems reasonable to my mind, to base our opinions on the origin of mythology on a study of the growth of mythology as it occurs under our own eyes" (Ibid., 879-80)

and Barbeau completely, there was some overlap in interests. Barbeau was first introduced to the Northwest Coast at the suggestion of his supervisor at Oxford. His 1910 masters thesis, *The Totemic System of Northwestern Indian Tribes of North America*, “drew heavily on the literature of Franz Boas” (Nowry 1995:82). Barbeau’s contact with Boas grew both professionally and personally over the years, with Barbeau visiting Boas at the Boas’s summer cottage on Lake George, and as colleagues at the American Folklore Society, where Boas was editor and Barbeau served as associate editor. Both men were very interested in mythology and folklore.¹¹⁷

Barbeau’s perceived lack of interest in this area is evidenced by an almost total lack of any mention of matters relating to art or the Arts and Craft Movement in his later works, such as *Totem Poles, Vols. I and II* (1950) and *Haida Carvers in Argillite* (1957). Barbeau’s belief that the Northwest Coast culture was destined to disappear drove him to preserve the art even though he never fully understood it.

Other scholars have identified different agendas of Barbeau’s. For example, Charles C. Hill (1995:190-193) believes that *The Canadian West Coast Art—Native and Modern* exhibition was “linked (to) the publication of Barbeau’s *Downfall of Temlaham* (1928:191), while Barbeau’s biographer Laurence Nowry stated that the “intended (purpose of) the 1927 exhibition (was to) promote interest in *totem pole cultures*” (1995:280). There can be little doubt that all of the above reasons were part of Barbeau’s overall agenda, but no one has mentioned what I believe was

¹¹⁷ The closeness of the two men cannot be ignored. Boas thought enough of Barbeau to enlist his help in preparing Boas’ son Henry for admission to the Catholic Agricultural Institute in Oka Quebec, for which Boas was “very deeply indebted” to Barbeau (Nowry 1995:178).

Barbeau's main agenda: the persistence of his dream for a National Park of Temlaham at Hazelton. The Park was his overriding passion, and he never gave up the idea.

I also suggest that Barbeau knew that it was extremely important that the exhibition project have a sense of "legitimacy." While Barbeau was known and respected in eastern Canada as an anthropologist/ ethnologist, especially in the area of folklore, he was not known as an art critic or art historian in any area, let alone in the "new" area of Native art of the Northwest Coast. To gain credibility he was able to enlist the support of Vincent Massey and Eric Brown, the director of the National Gallery of Canada. Brown and the National Gallery sponsored the exhibition, with Barbeau as coordinator with his employer, the National Museum of Canada, also acting as sponsor.¹¹⁸ "Because Brown was accused of favoring certain artists, especially by purchasing paintings by the Group of Seven" (Jackson 1958:80). He was a very important person in Canadian art history.¹¹⁹ Even as he was criticized for being one of the first important supporters of the Canadian Group of Seven (Hill 1995:138-9), he was impressed with the Native art of the Northwest Coast¹²⁰ through the work of Group of Seven artists such as A. Y. Jackson, Frederick Valley,

¹¹⁸ Additional sponsors included the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, McGill University, and the Art Association of Montreal. For the time and the subject matter of the exhibition, this was an extremely impressive diverse group of supporters, covering the academic community, the national government, the most important museum communities, and the art community. It is interesting to note that the provincial government of British Columbia, where all the Native art came from, was not a sponsor.

¹¹⁹ "Brown's public support of the Group of Seven and repeated identification of it as the most important movement in Canada had won him considerable hostility among some artists" (Hill 1995:24, 138).

¹²⁰ Given Brown's advocacy of the Group of Seven, there can be no doubt that he knew of Barbeau's work with the Gitksan. This, plus their work together on the exhibition, leaves no doubt that he was impressed with Native Northwest Coast art.

and Edwin Holgate, who worked with Barbeau providing scenes of the Upper Skeena for his books. Because Barbeau planned to include some of the work of Group of Seven, Brown's assistance for the exhibition doubtless supported his own agenda. Even though Emily Carr was not included in the Group of Seven,¹²¹ Brown was especially excited by Emily Carr's work among the Gitksan.¹²² After a visit to Carr's home in Victoria, B. C., he invited her to exhibit her work in Barbeau's exhibit. Barbeau agreed, having seen four of her paintings at the Sargent's family original hotel in Hazelton. She exhibited 26 paintings, the largest number by any artist in the exhibition. The exhibition opened to a small audience at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa on December 5, 1927, but was very well received in Toronto (January 6, 1928) and Montreal (February 17, 1928) as well as by the eastern press (Hill 1995:192, endnote 77).¹²³

Although Barbeau's bringing together of Native and non-Native art of the Northwest Coast did not consistently attract huge audiences, the exhibit was a success. I believe the exhibit was important to Barbeau's plan for the National Park Temlaham in that it demonstrated the continued success he needed to gain momentum for support of the park. The exhibit also positioned the Gitksan for the future development of totem pole restoration led by Polly Sargent, projects that

¹²¹ I suggest that Carr should have been included in a "Group of Eight." She was the first artist to have done as much or more than anyone to appreciate Northwest Coast Native art.

¹²² As time passed after the exhibition, Carr's unusual treatment of totem poles became an important factor in contributing to the 'mystique' of the Gitksan and other coastal cultures. Visual misrepresentations make for "mysterious Indians . . . in touch with the unseen forces of nature" (Francis 1992:188).

¹²³ None of the authors in *The Early Years of Native American Art History* (which includes chapters on the Canadian tribes of the Haida and Coast Salish) edited by Janet Catherin Berlo, mentions the 1927 exhibition of *Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern*.

would assist in the goal of creating a rich and attractive area-wide tourist destination.

The exhibition also brought Emily Carr respect as an artist. A. Y. Jackson, in his autobiography, *A Painter's Country*, stated that as a result of the exhibition, "the West Coast country is most associated with her name" (1958:91-2). Brown would later state that the exhibition put Emily Carr "on the map"¹²⁴ (Nowry 1995:280). Barbeau, on seeing Carr's paintings in Hazelton, stated that they were "certainly from a genuine artist" (Ibid., 279). I suggest that he saw her work among the Gitksan as part of the momentum for the development of the National Park. There is ample evidence that Carr's increasingly well-known Gitksan paintings and writings helped generate interest and respect for Gitksan art and the Upper Skeena as a tourist destination (Laurel Mould July 20, 2002). As Udall points out, "The faces Carr copied from totem poles speak of their respect for the religious traditions of Canada's first peoples. K. P. Stich observes ... Carr's twin self-concepts as writer and painter ... [such as] she sees personified in the carved figure of D'sonogua" (Udall 2000:295).

In retrospect, Barbeau's exhibition was an important metaphorical vehicle that brought the art of the Northwest Coast, especially the art of Gitksan, to eastern

¹²⁴ Carr's work was slow to gain respect due in part to her approach and her subjects, the Gitksan. A. Y. Jackson, a major artist and one of the exhibition's planners, was a strong supporter of her inclusion in the exhibition (Jackson 1958:91-2), but Emily Carr was seen as "an ugly duckling (in) ultra-Victorian Victoria . . . Her paintings were too modern and too Indian" (Norway 1995:279). Jackson, who also worked among the Gitksan, stated, "No artist in Canada had a more difficult struggle than Emily Carr and her work" (1958:91).

Canada;¹²⁵ its value cannot be overestimated. The interest and respect of the Canadian people for the art of the Northwest Coast began with CNR's relationship with the Gitksan totem poles, and it was the totem pole restoration projects that failed, not the concept of the totem pole or the exhibition. Events such as the exhibition led "the CNR to install a totem pole room for dining and dancing in the Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa in 1929" (Francis 1992:184). The totem pole projects were not only the impetus the exhibition, but, as Barbeau stated in his plan for the National Park at Hazelton, the "totem pole villages" were central to his strategy. Although the failure to restore enough poles made it impossible for him to sell his idea for the National Park, the idea behind the totem poles projects never died. Based on my reading of the documents and evidence from my interviews, I suggest that the vision to restore totem poles, sustained for over forty years, led to the development of 'Ksan, the restoration of Gitksan art, and the development of Northwest Coast art, traditional and contemporary, into one of the most successful art forms in the world.

In 1949, there was a renewed governmental interest, working in concert with Sargent and the save the totems group, in totem pole restoration. More importantly, there was a shift towards the general sense that the art of the Gitksan and other Northwest Coast Native art was not simply 'craft.' The first serious studies began to use the term "art" for Northwest Coast creativity. As I noted in my introduction, these definitions are central in influencing perceptions of the value of

¹²⁵ The catalogue of the exhibition *Canadian West Coast Art—Native and Modern* contained a preface by Eric Brown, who noted the work of Northwest tribal artists "as one of the most valuable of Canada's artistic productions," but singled out Carr's work as "one of the most interesting features of the exhibition" (1927:2).

art. Significantly, the Native persons creating these art works were referred to as “artists” by scholars—such as by Franz Boas in several of his publications, the most important being, *The Decorative Art of the Indians of the North Pacific Coast* (1897:123-176) and his expansion of that work, *Primitive Art* (1927).

As I argue that these definitions of “art,” “craft,” “artist,” and “artisan” are all important to understanding what was at stake in the creation of ‘Ksan. It was 1927 before the creative work of Canadian First Nations artists was displayed in the context of an art gallery. The Exhibition of *Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* was first exhibited at the National Gallery in Ottawa. It was a landmark exhibition which displayed works of Canadian modernist artists such as Emily Carr and some members of the nationalist Group of Seven with its juxtapositions with First Nations art such as carved house posts, masks, painted chests and other objects. The gallery’s director, Eric Brown states in the catalogue that: “to mingle for the first time the art work of the Canadian West Coast tribes with that of our more *sophisticated* artists in an endeavor to analyses their relationships to one another, if such exists, and particularly to enable this primitive and interesting art to take a definite place as one of the most valuable of Canada’s artistic productions” (emphasis added) (National Gallery of Canada 1927:2). Decontextualized Native works were carefully arranged and displayed as ‘art’ along with Canadian modernist works in the exhibition. Nemiroff states, “The conscious aestheticism of the presentation, which intermingled the native and non-native works, placed the emphasis on visual experience as the privileged conveyer of meaning, in keeping with one of the principle tenets of modernism” (1992:23). Native art was

appropriated to highlight works of modernist artists whose theme was the majestic and romantic Canadian landscape, which was the overriding purpose for the exhibition.

On a national level, it was a time when the Canadian government invested major funding to extend the National Railroad system for tourist purposes as I mentioned previously. The government realized that while the natural beauty of the Rocky Mountains and the coastal mountains were a commercial asset, the Northwest Coast Native imagery which included 'exotic' totem poles were a valuable tourist asset that no other country could offer. To take advantage of the possibilities, museum staff and government officials including anthropologist, Marius Barbeau and archaeologist, Harlan Smith were appointed to act as coordinators to restore or relocate some of the newer totem poles around railroad lines for the national project (Cole 1985:270-77; Francis 1992:183; Barbeau 1929:1). This exhibition of Native art in situ was a major part of the promotional strategies for the project. Although First Nations art was institutionally validated as a respected part of Canada's artistic heritage by the expenditure of tax revenue, it is ironic that those same respected First Nations art works were under the "Indian Act" since 1867, in which the Canadian government prohibited First Nations artists from creating art that was related with ceremonial and cultural events.

Unlike the exhibition of *Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery in Canada, *Indian Art of the United States* was solely organized to feature the comprehensive art history of Native American art from prehistory to modern. The organizers' strategy, an "art-for-art's sake display" (D'Harcourt to

Heye, October 9, 1940: IACB34, cited by Rushing [1992:195]) was to promote Native American art as 'fine art'. As we learn from Douglas and d'Harnancourt, "We have preserved the work of the Indian's ethnology, let us enjoy it as art" (Douglas and d'Harnancourt 1941:169). The exhibition was designed in three sections: 'Prehistoric Art,' 'Living Traditions,' and 'Indian Art for Modern Living.' The inclusion of contemporary aspects of Native American art in the exhibition was breaking new ground for Indian art exhibits at that time. One of the organizers, d'Harnancourt gave meticulous attention to detail, his consideration and selection of each object and the design of the exhibition was done to promote the "decontextualization of ancient art, contextualization of historic art, and recontextualization/ aestheticization of contemporary art" (Rushing 1992:197; 1995:220-21), which would give exhibition patrons a view of "the complete integration of art and culture in Indian society" (Rushing 1992:219). The exhibition received great reviews and was an instant and far reaching success, which greatly influenced the change of perception of Native American art as "fine art" (Jonaitis 1981:4). The goal of the exhibition was not only to appreciate Native American art as part of the national artistic heritage as the title suggests, but also to "create a new interest in Indian arts and crafts, to help develop the marketing of Indian products," which d' Harnancourt was tasked to do a few years earlier (Schradler 1983:223).

The early exhibitions in the United States, and to lesser degree, Canada, demonstrate how museum curators and scholars played an important role of developing a growing national appreciation for the values and status of objects of Native creativity, helping to elevate the perception of that creativity from 'craft/

artifact' to 'art.' The validation of the art legitimated for institutions of art, artists, critics and interested publics and at various levels of government a change in the perception of objects.

The exhibition, however, did little to fuel interest in the National Park. Barbeau remained an important figure in Canadian ethnology over the next thirty years, but the influence of Harlan Smith and the others from the failed totem pole restoration projects of the 1920s gradually diminished. In the 1950s, Wilson Duff from the British Columbia Provincial Museum (later from the University of British Columbia) envisioned a tourist destination among the Gitksan, although it was not the National Park envisioned by Barbeau.

After Barbeau's publication of *The Downfall of Temlaham* in 1928, he only returned to the Gitksan of the Upper Skeena River three times, in 1929, 1939, and 1947. His study of Gitksan totem poles¹²⁶ was perhaps his greatest literary achievement¹²⁷ on the Northwest Coast, but his loss of the leadership position on the Totem Pole Restoration Project to Harlan Smith clearly continued to trouble him even years later ([CMC] Carmen Roy collection, Marius Barbeau memoirs, page 81, real 108 1957, box: 622, F.3). While the restoration project was not the technical success it is often described as in the literature (Ward 1978:6; Darling and Cole

¹²⁶ While elements of Barbeau's studies of actual totem poles are still respected and used in contemporary studies, his theory on the origin of totem poles is not (Nowry 1995:345-348).

¹²⁷ Barbeau wrote more than 900 articles and books, many important to the Gitksan and other Tsimshian groups: *the Totem Poles of the Gitksan, Upper Skeena River, British Columbia* (1929); *Totem Poles, Volumes One and Two* (1950), *The Tsimshian: Their Arts and Music* (with Viola Garfield and Paul Wingert) (1951); *Medicine Men on the North Pacific Coast* (1958); and *Tsimshian Narratives, Volume One* (1987) and *Volume Two* (1987a), both edited by John Cove and George MacDonald).

1980:29-48),¹²⁸ the Canadian National Railway (CNR)¹²⁹ did view it as a limited success. The railway route from Hazelton to Terrace had proximity to totem poles, and in the 1930s the CNR developed a park of totem poles of the coastal Tsimshian in Prince Rupert, the end of CNR's western line (Hawker 2003:135).

Even without the Gitksan totem poles as an inducement, the western bound traveler was in for a visual treat. Coming from the east at Prince George, B.C., the CNR passed alongside the beautiful Burns Lake area, an oasis after many miles of brown shrubby earth. Moving past Houston and Smithers, the railroad first entered Gitksan territory at the present town of Hazelton near the junction of the 'Ksan (Skeena) and the Bulkley Rivers. The view is truly majestic: the towering Stekyawden (Red Rose Peak) in the rugged Rocher Debole Range, the Hagwilger Canyon, and the rushing waters of the Skeena. In the spring, the melting snow waters crash down from as far away as the Continental Divide. The train continued westward along the Skeena, following the right bank behind Kitwanga village with its totem poles. The restoration projects were evidence of the federal government's ability to shape tourism patterns in tandem with CNR's investments (Hawker 2003:50). But, while there was always optimism that the next restoration project would be even more successful, sales such as the 1923 Gitksan pole to New York's American Museum of Natural History directly threatened the financial viability of a successful tourist program in the Northwest Coast (Ibid.).

¹²⁸ Mounting and painting the poles posed technological difficulties. However, no thought was given to maintaining them, and many toppled again within a few years.

¹²⁹ The CNR was primarily involved with the restoration projects from 1925 to 1930. Their efforts are listed chronologically. The CPR was later primarily involved with the tourism side of the business.

As noted by one scholar, location plays a crucial factor in the development of the tourist trade: “To compete for tourists, a location must become a destination” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:152). While the CNR’s western terminus of Prince Rupert had its own small totem pole park, it was simply a “park”—with none of the cachet of seeing poles in their traditional setting. Despite the fantastic scenery along the Skeena River, it was the poles that many of the tourists wanted to see, and the Skeena Valley branch of the CNR was advertised as “the railway to totem pole land” (Francis 1992:183). The CNR saw the Gitksan poles as a monetary resource to be protected. This required connecting with different governmental agencies, but especially the Provincial Museum of British Columbia and the University of British Columbia. These became patrons—albeit with differing agendas—of Gitksan art and culture, making a destination possible.

As a tourist destination, Kitwanga was the first Gitksan village to enjoy early success. In an article in the *Montreal Gazette* (May 25, 1925), Kitwanga is described “as *the* show place of northern British Columbia and, next to Niagara Falls, the most photographed spot in Canada” (Cole 1985:272). While receiving extremely positive coverage from the national press, behind the scenes the project was experiencing both technical problems and personality conflicts. In the 1926 Annual Report for the National Museum of Canada, Harlan Smith, leader of the project, stated that for the years 1925 and 1926, only sixteen totem poles and two totem figures were treated (Darling and Cole 1980:36-7). This was far short of Barbeau’s 1924 survey that recommended 71 poles be preserved. Importantly, Smith reports that the project turned out to be “a more expensive and difficult job than appeared at first”

(Nowry 1995:222). The project was discontinued at the end of the 1926 field season (Duff 1997:123),¹³⁰ and described as an (unrewarding) experiment: “at best (the project) had enjoyed only a very limited success . . . as a co-operative venture it experienced serious problems” (Malin 1986:175).

These problems included dissention, petty intrigue, resistance from within the totem pole committee, and an assumption that Barbeau and Smith would cooperate when in fact that would prove difficult to achieve (Darling and Cole 1980:45). Barbeau’s interests were seen as intellectual rather than “practical,” especially his unrealistic proposal to renovate 71 poles. Smith’s proposal, on the other hand, would have seemed more realistic from the CNR’s viewpoint, particularly given that it was “the aim of (the preservation) committee to preserve the poles and other objects that will be of interest to tourists” ([CMC] Correspondence, Scott to Smith, 8th May 1925). As Ward suggests, “Smith had accepted without question the commercial motivation for the project, and the primacy of the CNR’s interests” (Ward 1989:16). Smith advanced the idea of Kitwanga becoming a resort rather than just a “slow spot” on the tracks to view the totem poles as a tourist attraction ([CMC] Correspondence, Smith to Scott 22 January 1926). It is interesting to note, however, that Barbeau promoted the concept of a “tourist resort” in late 1923 in his concept paper for a National Park of Temlaham at Hazelton, two years before Smith promoted his resort idea at

¹³⁰ There are two end dates in the literature, both correct. Duff is speaking of the time when the project was co-sponsored by the CNR, the Department of Indian Affairs, the Department of Mines, National Parks, and the National Museum; whereas Keithahn (1963:118), and Darling and Cole (1980:44-5) refer to the end date as 1930, when the work was carried on solely by the Department of Indian Affairs and the CNR. Not all of the sponsors worked as a cohesive unit, nor did all have the same goals. The CNR and DIA had perhaps the strongest commitment to the restoration projects.

Kitwanga. There can be no doubt that Smith knew of Barbeau's petition for the park/resort, and tried to beat Barbeau at his own game, again highlighting the tension between the two men (Darling and Cole 1980:35).

Could Barbeau have made a difference at Kitwanga? It is highly doubtful. The problems between these two men made cooperation impossible. As outlined in chapter two, Barbeau was able to convince Duncan Scott that Smith was a liability to the project, and, as a consequence, Scott withdrew Smith's funding. Other committee members were incensed and Barbeau was forced from the committee. There can be little doubt that the rancor of the committee toward Barbeau played an important part in the failure of his dream of the Temlaham National Park at Hazelton. Barbeau partially blamed Smith for that failure, pointing to Smith's pressuring of the committee to remove Barbeau.

Barbeau also believed he should have received greater support from Edward Sapir, his supervisor when he was at the National Museum of Canada ([CMC] Carmen Roy collection, Barbeau memoirs, Reel 109, 1957-8, Box 622, F.3, page 65). However, in spite of Barbeau's feelings, expressed more than thirty years later, it is my opinion that initially Sapir was in fact supportive of the tourist project in the Gitksan area, especially since it was a project heavily supported by various governmental agencies, including the CNR, the Indian Department, Canadian National Parks and the National Museum of Canada, which all provided financial assistance, technical assistance, and professional personnel.¹³¹ Barbeau's 1924 plan

¹³¹ The Department of Indian Affairs not only financed but also supervised the project, naming Duncan Campbell Scott in general charge. The CNR, as a publicly owned railway, had great influence with several agencies, such as J. B. Harkin with the Canadian National Parks Agency. The CNR would provide transportation for men and material and one of its bridge engineers and T. B. Campbell to

for the National Park included the restoration of Kitwanga's poles as part of the regional plan with Hazelton at the center. However it is probable that Sapir could not support the much larger, and dramatically more expensive National Park proposal. It is also probable that because many of the Gitksan saw no profit from the project, they refused to cooperate (Francis 1992:184), especially after Barbeau was forced out. It is clear that many of the owners of the totem poles refused to have their poles moved because of the problems with Smith (Darling and Cole 1980:29-48), thereby making the project impractical. There is no doubt; therefore, that Barbeau's elimination from the restoration project was also a blow to his plans for the Temlaham Park.

In spite of the restoration project's unsatisfactory results from a technical viewpoint,¹³² with only a limited number of totem poles restored (Malin 1986:175), it marked the beginning of a major shift to create a tourist destination on the Northwest Coast. While the totem pole restoration project was a consortium of various Canadian government agencies, and had positive support of a good number of Canadian citizens, the CNR should be given major credit for making the territory of the Gitksan a specific destination for tourists. Without the commercial interest of the CNR, the Gitksan would not have received the attention that it did. The "railway to totem pole land" (Francis 1992:183) advertising campaign marked the beginning of the Canadian tourist efforts in the Pacific Northwest. Even though it was not a commercial success for the railroad, its legacy led to the totem pole being the

advise on mechanical issues. Deputy Minister of Mines Dr. Charles Camsell also supported CPR's role to encourage tourist travel.

¹³² For the most complete discussion of the technical problems, see Darling and Cole (1980:29-48).

symbol of Canada, as evidenced by the growing number of totem poles found throughout Canada and the world.

Even without Barbeau's National Park, the "marketing of the Skeena Valley poles as a tourist attraction" was not lost on the Canadian public. Daniel Frances states that the appropriation of the totem pole made it an unofficial symbol of British Columbia, and to a large extent, of Canada (Ibid.). As part of Barbeau's legacy, *The Totem Poles of the Gitksan, Upper Skeena River, British Columbia* (1929) contributed greatly to the emerging symbol. The popularity of the poles raised the value of these works of art in the estimation of the Canadian public. However, as described in my first chapter, while the totem poles were gradually becoming known and valued as works of art, the totem pole carvers and the knowledge needed to convey the symbolism of the poles were being lost. The long road back took the time and talents of many people, Native and non-Native, as chapters four and five will demonstrate. The Skeena Valley campaign to make the restored totem poles of the Upper Skeena Gitksan a popular tourist destination was never successful, and totem pole restoration during this period was limited to mostly ineffective attempts by Gitksan groups to restore their own poles.¹³³ Between 1937-1942, however, when the poles of Kitwanga were damaged by the "spectacular flood of 1936 ... the restoration response was remarkable (Ward 1989:24-7). It was also at the end of this period that Margaret (Polly) Pollete married Bill Sargent, and moved to Hazelton.

¹³³ It is important to recognize that the Gitksan were neither less effective nor more effective than earlier non-Native efforts.

During the war years and immediately after, only minor efforts were made in the restorations, but during this period, as Ward notes, “Polly Sargent found time to run the best hotel on the Skeena, to be active in local politics, but most importantly she began to achieve an understanding of Indian affairs that earned her respect from, as well actual acceptance by the Native community” (Ibid., 31). The Sargents’ hotel, the Islander, was the “natural headquarters for Native heritage activities and Mrs. Sargent their natural leader” (Ibid.). Barbeau stayed with his cousin in Hazelton during the period before the hotel was built, but after the hotel was built, he conducted business there, as did all other government officials, anthropologists, and business leaders who were guests. At the same time Polly “gathered about her a loose association of enthusiasts who began to call themselves the “save the totems group” (Ibid., 33).

Polly Sargent’s passion for the community led her to become deeply immersed in preservation of the Gitksan culture. Hers was the most influential voice behind the concept for the (Gitksan) Skeena Treasure House. The original House was a small building (20 feet x 30 feet) made of large thick cedar planks similar to a traditional big house. It originally contained a library that later doubled as a small “museum,” featuring a few pieces of traditional Tsimshian art loaned from the Sargent family and others from the Native and non-Native community as well as a very small sales outlet for locally made handicrafts. From the first timid but successful steps to establish the Treasure House, Polly Sargent¹³⁴ would later become the driving force to establish the ‘Ksan Village. Paying homage to Polly was

¹³⁴ In correspondence from the 1950s, Margaret was known simply as “Polly.”

“the ‘Ksan Association wishes to pay special tribute to Mrs. Margaret H. (Polly) Sargent who would not permit the inclusion of her personal effort and contribution to the ‘Ksan project” (Margaret Sargent Personal Files, n.d.). The ‘Ksan who stated on “All we can say is that without Polly’s unflagging effort from the inception of the idea of the museum/library through all its subsequent developments right down to today, there would be no ‘Ksan” (n.d.).”¹³⁵

On April 19, 1956, the *Smithers Interior News* reported that the Hazelton Library Association, established in 1947-48, with Sargent as president, had (at last)¹³⁶ announced planning for the “building (of) a memorial library/museum as a means of retaining and preserving the treasures of the Indian people of this area as a monument to the district’s historic past. It will add to the tourist attractions of the north as a whole and give the Hazelton district the opportunity to play its role as a focal point of north central British Columbia” (5). This announcement was to have far-reaching consequences for the revival of lost cultural knowledge in Gitanmaax (Hazelton). The library/museum would become a rich treasure trove of evidence of the Gitksans’ creative life. The Gitksan still possessed a large amount of art following the main collection years of 1880 to 1906, due to the remoteness of the area, and Sargent and her committee were the first to recognize the need for a tribal museum to protect these traditional arts. With the foundation of Native and non-

¹³⁵ I interviewed many Gitksan and non-Native residents of Hazelton and other Gitksan communities. Every responded most often without prompting, were effusive in their praise for Polly. It is clear that the ‘Ksan Association was correct that without Polly Sargent, the ‘Ksan Village would not materialized.

¹³⁶ The time lag between conception and announced construction for the building was eleven or twelve years. I remind the reader that Hazelton was a very small-unincorporated village with no official way to raise funds for a community project.

Native supporters from the totem group, her vision expanded from totem pole restoration, to the Skeena Treasure House, and finally to the collective vision for 'Ksan. However, the recorded efforts of Sargent, who led the Native and non-Native to focus their efforts on restoring poles over the next 30 years, is fragmented.¹³⁷

The monumental task of adapting Barbeau's concept¹³⁸ for a tourist resort/national park and bringing it to life as a tourist destination in a remote area of eastern B.C. was fraught with problems. Progress was slow. Cliff Weeks¹³⁹ states that fund raising for the Treasure House did not start until 1950 (1972:10). At the time, the popularity of B.C. Native creativity as an artistic commodity that helped to generate needed cultural capital began to gather momentum, especially in the major B.C. tourist destinations of Vancouver and Victoria. Mr. C. Harrison, then mayor of Victoria, is quoted as saying, "the days when we could advertise British Columbia as the land of big timber are over Our biggest attractions now are our Native art and relics which are nowhere else to be found in North America" (*Times Colonist*, December 18, 1953, p. 19). It is interesting to note that whereas originally the role

¹³⁷ The earliest dated minutes that mention the totem pole Restoration committee are May 1957 (MSPF), but the minutes mention past (no dates) problems and achievements.

¹³⁸ Leslie Dawn theorizes "that Barbeau, who visited Hazelton in 1947, might have alerted the Sargent to the value of Native arts" (1981:90). I disagree. Barbeau visited Hazelton many times, living there for periods of time in the 1920s. While he almost certainly discussed the value of Native art, especially Gitksan art, the Sargent family, collectors themselves, would have gained this knowledge from a number of people, especially the early buyers representing the many museums who raced to purchase the best material of all the northern tribes. The Sargent collection is now part of the 'Ksan Museum collection (Barbara Coleman interview, July 26, 2003). While Barbeau was a source of information during the later years of the collection era, to imply that he was the only source knowing the value of Gitksan art is very misleading. See also Ostrowitz's comments on Bill Sargent's comments in a letter to Gordon Hilker: "I'm damn sure there's gold mine in (Native art and crafts) (Ostrowitz 2009:132).

¹³⁹ Surrounding 'Ksan are often at odd with each other. Weeks was for a time corresponding secretary for the magazine *'Ksan: Hazelton, British Columbia* (1972).

of First Nations artists in the creation of the art was referred to in the past tense, the Canadian government, and more importantly the Canadian people, now were beginning to embrace the Native culture.

Stanley Rough, a non-Native, was a retired public relations person from Kitimat who worked diligently with Polly Sargent and others to restore totem poles. He also worked with the Skeena Treasure House Committee. He was the first known person to write with any specificity of the Skeena Treasure House, also known as the Museum at Hazelton, British Columbia. Rough stated:

that originally built as a dual-purpose building, half was dedicated as a library, and half was a house for traditional treasures of the Gitksan, Nishiga, Haida, Kwakiutl, and Carrier peoples. Rough stated that: the building was to be constructed in the same manner as in ancient time, but also the art has been forgotten ... the article on display consist of head-dressed worn in ceremonial dances and secret society rites. Some have the crowns hollowed out so that the dancers could shake the eagle down over visitors as a mark of friendships. There are many ceremonial blankets, button blankets with designs made of white pearl buttons sewn on, displayed on the walls. Then there are rattles, whistles, drums and legging, dancing tunics fringed with the hooves of mountain goats to create a rattling noise when dancing. There was a talking stick representing authority to speak, and several with doctor kits. In the war section are spear pints, slings arrow heads, war clubs, and clubs for killing slaves. There were eating utensils including spoons of alder and goat horn and bowls. Cedar bark mats and baskets with pleasing designs, bentwood boxes often decorated with family crests. Other exhibits including gambling sticks, carved silver bracelets, skinning knives decorated halibut hooks, a baby's cradles, a fish trap, a canoe bailer, a tumpline strap and board, a beaver net, stone adzes, bone needles and a stone for grinding berries, and actual coppers representing great wealth, and several carved masks (Rough, Stanley, 1965, n.d. [2-page brochure]).

The first minutes of Hazelton Centennial Committee that mention the construction of a small-scale (27 feet by 30 feet) traditional "feast house," later to be called the Skeena Treasure House, as a museum are dated May 16, 1957 (STHC). They show that fund-raising projects had begun, with \$800 collected, and that the

Provincial Fund for the Centennial promised to match these funds. Although an undetermined number of the early committee meeting minutes are missing,¹⁴⁰ this evidence of the provincial government funding—perhaps the first direct funding for the ‘Ksan project of Gitksan art and culture—reveals a clear vote of confidence for the project. The minutes confirm that the project was approved by an earlier interim committee, but it also notes that some villages, led by Kispiox, went from supporting to opposing the project over their displeasure with the involvement of the Provincial Centennial Committee¹⁴¹ ([STHC] Hazelton Centennial Committee Minutes, *Ibid.*). The reader should not assume that Kispiox felt the Provincial Centennial Committee was conducting a “power play” over the Treasure House Project. As noted, the minutes are of the “Hazelton Centennial Committee”; Sargent was able to get funding from the Province to help with the building costs of the Treasure House even though Hazelton was not yet incorporated.¹⁴²

It must be remembered that Barbeau had selected Kispiox as the first village to have their totem poles restored, but, as discussed in chapter two, the restoration

¹⁴⁰ While many early documents are missing, I have also located many documents and correspondence in various locations without dates. Through a matching process using other evidence (such as newspaper accounts and documents and correspondence with dates), I have assigned what I believe are reasonable approximate dates to some documents. These speculative dates are identified. Because Hazelton was not yet an “official” town, no procedures for storing meeting minutes, correspondence, etc. Originally Polly kept all records in an undisclosed location, most likely her office at the Inlander Hotel/Lounge where most committee meetings were held.

¹⁴¹ The idea that the Treasure House was initially a centennial project, as claimed by Leslie Dawn, is erroneous (1981:91-3). Minutes of the Hazelton Centennial Committee state, “The idea of building [the Treasure House] was conceived prior to any knowledge of the Centennial. All Indian villages had enthusiastically supported the scheme [of building the Treasure House] until we decided to amalgamate our idea with the centennial scheme, thereby gaining additional funds” ([STHC] Hazelton Centennial Committee Minutes, May 16, 1957).

¹⁴² It was, and is, almost impossible to gain funding for a non-official group of citizens. This was certainly a coup for Polly.

was overturned and Barbeau lost his position. Harlan Smith, the new project manger, was told to use his discretion from the outset of the project, but the interest of tourism and the CNR were clearly predominant, “It is the aim of the (Totem Pole Restoration) Committee to preserve the poles and other objects that will be of interest of tourists (Darling and Cole 1980:35).¹⁴³ Kispiox was 12 miles from the CPR, and they wanted a village closer to the railroad.

The early Treasure House Committees¹⁴⁴ did not have representation from all the Gitksan people when the project was in the very early organizational phase (Doreen Jensen interview, May 18, 2002). When it became a joint library/museum project, Chief Alfred Douse from Kitwancool joined the committee and, assisted by Chief Bert Russel of Kitsegucla, was very active in the promotion of the project. In 1953 Gitksan Doreen Jensen, influenced by Chief Douse and Chief Russel, joined the committee.¹⁴⁵ At the name committee meeting to the museum, Chief Douse insisted, “Don’t call it a museum. A museum is where you put objects of a dead

¹⁴³ Of course the Kispiox knew they were pawns in the game and were not happy. I suggest that it is possible they were still unhappy with the Province, and that was the reason for their response. The Kispiox eventually supported the project.

¹⁴⁴ The Treasure House project had several committees such as concept, fundraising, building design, etc.

¹⁴⁵ Dawn, working primarily from newspaper accounts, states that in 1957 the committee was “composed entirely of members of the white Hazelton community” (1981:93). However, Gitksan Native Doreen Jensen states, “I joined them [the committee] in 1953, there was only one other First Nations person (Chief Douse) on the museum board beside myself at the time” (Doreen Jensen interview, May 18, 2002). Dawn also states that the Centennial Board was not replaced by the Skeena Treasure House Committee until early 1960 (1981:97). Actually, construction on the Treasure House had already begun in 1958; the Centennial Committee, already known as the Treasure House Committee, met on January 28, 1959, to officially change the committee name ([STHC] Treasure House Committee Minutes); and the first official committee meeting was on February 5, 1959 with Polly Sargent elected chairperson.

culture. Our culture is not dead; let it be called the Skeena Treasure House”

(Weeks 1972:12

.0). The committee approved the name; however, promotional literature circulating after the opening of the Treasure House stated, in large letters, “Skeena Treasure House, the Museum at Hazelton, British Columbia” (Rough [1965]: cover). Nothing in the committee minutes indicate that Chief Douse was unhappy with the longer title. At that point, there was no longer confusion over the joint use of the Treasure House, Library, and/or Museum. The Treasure House would soon become the seed for ‘Ksan.

In 1956 the village of Hazelton was incorporated and Sargent was elected mayor.¹⁴⁶ This enabled her to use her position to officially represent the village in support of the conceptualization and construction of the Treasure House and the ‘Ksan village. This was perhaps the most important point in the early development of ‘Ksan. The legal designation of an official village was required to hold a referendum vote to pay for the construction through taxation and to make the community eligible for many governmental and most corporate grants. Prior to the recognition of Hazelton as a village, the Natives and non-Natives of the Gitksan area held small community fund-raising projects, such as bake sales, dances, flower sales, etc., raising enough funds to commission William Henry Brimingham, a non-Native architect from Vancouver, to design a replica of a traditional Gitksan ceremonial house (**figure 19**). As the records show, Brimingham was also charged with

¹⁴⁶ Polly Sargent often used her political power during Hazelton/Gitksan projects, both pre- and post-Hazelton incorporation.

researching and recommending the design for the housefront painting and “two house posts.”¹⁴⁷ “The house is to be a monument to the artistic ability and the achievements of the people of the Skeena” ([STHC] Brimingham and Hollingsworth, Hazelton Centennial Committee Minutes, May 16, 1957).

The construction of the Treasure House was completed and opened in 1958 as a part of B.C. Centennial Celebration (**figure 20**). However, the house posts and the art for the housefront were delayed over the search for a suitably qualified artist. Finally, the contract for the houseposts was given to Jeffery Johnson *Hannamauxw*, a chief of the Gitsegyukla band of the Gitksan. While the design of the building itself was a modern, conventional structure, the addition of the traditional aspects—the simulated house posts and painted housefront—proved to be problematic. Originally, the Committee only discussed a design for the housefront, believing that a qualified painter would be easier to find than a carver. The first design selected was that of a bear ([STHC] Treasure House Committee notes, unknown date), but this was rejected (for unknown reasons) in favor of a button blanket design, which is not a Gitksan traditional design for a housefront. The committee, recognizing the traditional ownership of designs¹⁴⁸ by Gitksan families

¹⁴⁷ While the artist renderings show traditional load-bearing house posts, the actual posts are free standing, not “corner posts” as described by Dawn (1981:101-2). Stan Rough places the posts “at the front corners” when the Treasure House was originally built ([1965]:2). When the building was moved to the ‘Ksan village site, the posts were placed closer to the door, where they are now located. Because the posts are now placed inboard, they do not reach the western “hip” style roof, further reducing the traditional “feel” of the post.

¹⁴⁸ Throughout the Northwest Coast, designs, songs, dances and names are owned by specific individuals, families, clans, etc. and cannot be used without “official” permission

or individuals, accepted the responsibility to contact the owners for permission to use the design on the button blanket.¹⁴⁹

Hannamauxw, a Gitsegyula chief, raised an old refurbished pole, Ganm'mXm'a xi (rainbow pole) (Anderson and Halpin 2000:43-45) during the 1945 potlatch at Gitsegukla (Adams 1973: 84). As tradition dictates, a chief would not have carved or worked on his own pole, and the refurbishment was undertaken by the well-known carver, Haxpagwo'tkw (Arthur McDames) from Gitsegukla. The initial carver is thought to have been Kwawdzabarc from Kitwanga in the late 19th century (Barbeau 1929: 82-43, photo: 237, no.4). There is no evidence that Johnson, a fisherman, ever carved anything. It is my belief that if Johnson had done any important carving, Barbeau would have recorded it. But Johnson is not mentioned anywhere in any of Barbeau's writings, specifically in *Totem Poles of the Gitksan: Upper Skeena River* (1929). However, on June 1, 1960, Johnson was reported to have finished carving for the STH and was "installing" the simulated house posts near the corners, and the committee gave him "a hearty vote of thanks" ([STHC] Minutes, no date). The two house posts were later moved closer to the door. The

¹⁴⁹ At this time, Victor Wale was suggested as the artist to paint the housefront ([STHC] Treasure House Committee Minutes, February 5th, 1959 & March 23, 1959), but his inability to commit to full time work ([STHC] Treasure House Committee Minutes, May 27, 1959) led the committee to withdraw his name. At some point Chief Johnson was also replaced, for reasons unknown. The Committee then approached Bob Lawson to carve the house posts and paint the housefront. By again, and for reasons unknown, the design for the housefront had changed again ([STHC] Treasure House Committee Minutes, August 4th, 1959 & December 8th, 1959): perhaps the Committee could not get permission to use the selected design on the button blanket. Bob Lawson no longer appeared in the minutes as the appointed painter, again with no reason noted. Once again, Freddy Wale was asked to paint the housefront, and he agreed ([STHC] Minutes, February 26, 1960). And again, with no reason given, Hannamauxw (Jeffery Johnson) agreed to carve the poles ([STHC] Minutes, April 13th, 1960). What is clear in all of this is that the approach to selecting a design for the housefront was completely untraditional and that the selection of designs for housefronts and totem poles was never designated by committee.

house posts¹⁵⁰ are around two meters in height (carved to the scale of the Treasure House).

Leslie Dawn has stated that the carving of the house posts “testifies to the decline in Gitksan art since the turn of the 19th century” (1981:102). I agree with this assessment both in terms of artistic quality and the cultural politics of particular aesthetic choice.¹⁵¹

But further than this, not only is the design poorly conceived and executed, it is not even Gitksan. It looks like a poorly executed Kwakwaka’wakw-type design. Chief Johnson, raised in the traditional culture, certainly would have known how to “read” Gitksan totem poles, but the inferior carving on the poles proves the point Barbeau, Wilson, Duff and many others had been making; that the knowledge the Gitksan needed to carve traditional totem poles was no longer to be found.

The difficulty of finding someone who knew how to properly carve or paint was the initial impetus for the idea “that it would be beneficial to have a school of Northwest Coast art” (Doreen Jensen interview, May 18, 2002). Once again it was Barbeau who may have indicated the direction through his suggestion in his treatise for a National Park in Hazelton (see chapter two) that “while the Indian carvers and weavers are rapidly disappearing, it might be possible, under sympathetic assistance, to bring about a revival of some of these arts” ([CMC] Correspondence,

¹⁵⁰ They were not, in any sense, load-bearing house posts/poles.

¹⁵¹ I have looked at hundreds of totem poles *in site*, in storage, or on display in most of the major museums in North America, on the Northwest Coast of Canada, and Alaska. I have also looked at a great many pictures of housefronts in the literature, as actual housefronts are very rare. In 25 years of research, I may have seen 20 housefronts, mostly in museums and a very few on western style homes.

Barbeau to Harkin, J. B., B202 F.22). I suggest that Barbeau had instruction of some sort in mind, something resembling a small school and Barbeau's plan was the impetus for 'Ksan.

However, Dawn suggests that while the poles exhibited all the points of Barbeau's definition of poor carving, "their very existence confirms the proposition that new carvers could, and did, arise following the death of the old ones, and before 'Ksan began" (Ibid., 103). The culture, as Chief Douse stated above, was not lost, but sleeping. It is important to note that one cannot gain the knowledge needed to carve a pole simply by looking at the pole designs. While the housefront painting by Freddie Wale was reported to be better than the carving, it was reported to be a copy of a generic Gitksan design from an aged traditional bentwood grease box (*Victoria Sunday Times-Herald* August 22, 1965:44). Today the faded design is difficult to identify.

Progress for a tourist attraction large enough to have a positive impact on the Upper Skeena area was slow. My research revealed that no one of Gitksan heritage could be found to teach the carving arts or even to take part in the planning phase. Cliff Weeks, author of a 24-page pamphlet on the history of 'Ksan, sums up the situation: "[T] here was a demand for the exquisite carving of Gitksan, not from the Chiefs and *halayt*, but from interested non-Indians" (1972:13). Barbeau, in his memorandum, stated, "It might be possible, under sympatric assistance to bring about 'a revival of *some* of these arts' and the products could be sold to visiting tourists" (emphasis added) (see Chapter Two). His choice of words is interesting: although positive in describing the merits of the proposed National Park, he seemed

to assume that some of the arts were forever lost. Because of the worldwide ‘familiarity’ with totem poles and masks, many tourists have no idea of the breadth of Northwest Coast art beyond these. Visitors to Victoria, Vancouver, or Hazelton are able to see not only the results of the revival of Gitksan art but the original Coastal art itself because of ‘Ksan. During my research, I visited all the major and some smaller museums featuring Northwest Coast art in North America, but the best museum for viewing Northwest Coast art is the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria. The Museum was also the most important patron for the success of ‘Ksan. This dissertation attests to the fact that the little tourist village of ‘Ksan has been instrumental in bringing the art to a worldwide audience.

In 1949, Wilson Duff from the Provincial Museum and Harry Hawthorn¹⁵² from UBC conducted a three-week survey of totem poles and collected other ethnographic information, including the “many photographs of the Gitksan area, its villages, and totem-poles [which] were taken.”¹⁵³ The main goal was to examine “the present status of Indian cultures and arts and to establish good ethnographic informants” (*Provincial Museum of British Columbia [PMBC] Annual Report*, Duff 1950: B16). In 1951 Duff, other Provincial Museum of British Columbia (PMBC) staff members, and Polly Sargent, with Native and non-Native volunteers from the Hazelton area, began to plan another attempt to restore totem poles in the Gitksan

¹⁵² Harry and wife, Andrey Hathorn, were asked by the Massey Commission to survey the Native arts of Canada (Massey 1951, 239-43). Ira Jacknis has outlined the importance of the survey and subsequent work by the Harthorns on the arts of the Northwest Coast (Jacknis 2002:182).

¹⁵³ I am including only the work between the PMBC and Gitksan-related projects reported in the Annual Reports by Duff from 1949-52. The Museum’s anthropology section also worked on Haida totem poles projects and other projects in British Columbia.

area (*PMBC Annual Report*, Duff 1952:B20). In the following year, Duff states that he took a trip to the Gitksan in July to study the condition of the totem poles with the aim of promoting larger programs of totem pole restoration (*PMBC Annual Report*, Duff 1952:B19). Even though it was against the law, new poles were being carved, but “the art style had deteriorated badly ... at present there is only one active carver in the area—Arthur McDames of Kitseguikla, and he has never been a particularly good artist” (Ibid., 27). Duff found that all the Gitksan poles that had been restored in the 1920s had continued to decay to the point that they were “beyond hope of further preservation” (Duff et al. 1997:123). Although the preservation methods used during the restoration process were partly to blame, no thought had been given to ongoing maintenance following the process that would have helped to delay natural decay (Darling and Cole 1980:46-7).

While the staff at the PMBC in Victoria wanted to do more to preserve the Gitksan totem poles, they were aware of the technical, personal, and cultural problems encountered the 1920s. The gradual but relentless disintegration of the totem poles was not preserving the artistic heritage. One thing was clear; a different approach to cultural preservation was needed. The PMBC staff reported on the challenges of restoring totem poles, and the changes needed to maintain them in good order. The first was the development of a plan to place original Gitksan poles in the museum for permanent storage, and to carve and give an exact copy of the original pole to the owner. The second change was the beginning of a three-year restoration and carving program to replace the badly decaying exhibits at the museum’s Thunderbird Park, which included two additional goals: “to preserve the

art of totem carving (through an apprenticeship program with several apprentices), and to develop a unique tourist and educational attraction” at the museum, with Kwakiutl Mungo Martin¹⁵⁴ serving as head carver (*PMBC Annual Report*, Duff 1952:B21).

The tourist attraction, which consisted of a viewing area for tourists to see the sculptors as they carved, was considered “to be an outstanding success.” A survey found that in two eight-hour days during the summer tourist season, 2,375 persons watched the carvers at work. Nine hundred and sixty-two of them took pictures of the carvers, including 196 with movie cameras” (Ibid., B21, the exact date of the survey was not recorded). This was perhaps the first quantitative study of an educational project on Northwest Coast art with a serious tourist component. While the survey made no real attempt to qualify the stated educational goals of the attraction, museum officials believed that the project increased both awareness and

¹⁵⁴ Mungo Martin was born in 1879 in Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to parents of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation. He was the son of Yaxnukwelas, a high-ranking native from Gilford Island. His mother was known by her English name, Sarah Finlay, who was the daughter of a Kwakwaka'wakw woman and a Scottish man working with the Hudson's Bay Company. Martin's father died when he was in his teen years, his mother remarried to Yakuglas, also known in English as Charlie James (c. 1870-1938). As a boy Martin had been apprenticed as a carver to a paternal uncle, but it was Martin's stepfather Charlie James. In 1947, Martin was hired by the Museum of Anthropology at UBC for restoration and replica work. Later, Martin was hired in 1952 by the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, British Columbia to create works of Northwest Coastal Art as display pieces and examples. He also constructed a Kwakwaka'wakw “big house” at Thunderbird Park in front of the museum in 1953. To validate this building, Martin hosted a splendid three-day potlatch, December 1953. Two years before, the potlatch prohibition had been eliminated from the Indian Act, and Martin's opening ceremony for this house represented the first legal potlatch since 1884. In 1958, as part of the Centennial celebrations Martin created two 100-foot totem poles, exact replicas of each other, were carved from an original design created by Martin. One was sent to London, England, as a Centennial gift to Queen Elizabeth II from the people of B.C., and the other was located in Vancouver's Stanley Park (*PMBC Annual Report*, Duff 1956:C-24; Jonaitis and Glass 2010:158-160; 165-174). Mungo Martin continued to work on his carvings in his later years. Martin was one of the most significant and important Northwest Coast Native artists in 19th and 20th century. He died in 1962 at the age of 83 in Victoria and was taken on a Canadian Navy ship to be buried in Alert Bay (The B.C. Indian Arts Society 1982; Jacknis 2002:147-173; Glass 2006:20-43).

understanding of Northwest Coast art. Notwithstanding the size and problems of such a study, it justified the continuation of the efforts of the museum in the tourist portion of the carving program at the museum. Duff and museum officials were excited about their goal of preserving the art of totem carving. Certainly, the commitment to Northwest Coast art was there, and the culture exhibited by the museum was considerable. During this period, July 1952, Gitksan totem poles were purchased, transported to Victoria, and reconditioned or replicated when funding became available. In 1953, the new poles were erected in the totem pole park adjacent to the museum, and a traditional big house was erected. Of course, other traditional art such as masks, shaman rattles, spruce root baskets, and entire Northwest Coast collections were purchased. While the intentions of the museum carving program were to be lauded, it could not simple be sustained this pace. In late 1953, after a more pragmatic look at the expense of the expanded apprenticeship program, the carving program was reduced to Mungo Martin and one apprentice. The “original intention of the program was to include a school¹⁵⁵ for totem carving to produce several skilled carvers for the future. Suitable young men are now available, but there are no funds to employ them” (*PMBC Annual Report*, Duff 1954:B21). However, small amounts of money were found and replicas of some of the totem poles were carved: two of them came from Kitsegukla and these were collected in 1952.

¹⁵⁵ The word “school” used during the period (1950s-60s) is defined as an educational program of any size, length or subject, and not associated with a formal academic course at a college or university.

I suggest that the stated goal of a “school for totem carving” was perhaps more important as an idea than as a realizable project at that time. The mission of the museum, with its limited resources, would have at some point been in conflict with the idea of an actual school. A carving school was not part of the PMBC mission. However, the important idea of a carving school for Northwest Coast artists had begun to ferment, and the dramatic expansion of the mission of museum in matters concerning the totem poles and related subjects, affected by the obvious changes in policy in 1956, made it possible to pursue, over time, this idea from different perspectives. It would have an important bearing on the creation of a school at ‘Ksan.

The new policy, briefly outlined in a single, short paragraph in the annual report of 1956, allowed the PMBC the flexibility to take a more active interest in the development of local museums in the province. The first impact of the policy change was that “this year, for first time, the placement of totem poles in areas other than Thunderbird Park was to take place. The aim was to have the poles placed in appropriate places where they would be seen by the greatest number of people” (*PMBC Annual Report*, Duff 1956:D21). Importantly for my study, the first sites chosen were not museums but other public areas. There can be little doubt that the policy change was directed at tourism, and this would prove to be critical for the creation of ‘Ksan. The first two poles carved at PMBC were replicas of Haida house front poles collected in 1954. Both were raised in 1957, one in front of the British Columbia building at Exhibition Park in Vancouver, and the second was placed beside the Tourist Bureau Office, Customs Building, at the Peace Arch Park. The

“title”¹⁵⁶ to the poles was negotiated with the Haida when the originals were collected by the museum, transferring the responsibility of proper display and maintenance to the museum, and traditional ownership to the government. The goal was to “increase the public appreciation of Native art and counteract the effects of the atrocious totems so frequently seen” (Ibid.).

The new policy coincided with B.C.’s Centennial Celebration in 1958, and the fact that the centennial silver dollar had as its main design a partial Haida totem pole (housepost) seems to be more than coincidental. More important is the fact that this 1958 silver dollar is the first official government sponsored artwork of a traditional Northwest Coast tribal icon to be carved by a non-Native, already in the market place (Stephan Trenka) (Cross 2000:136) **(figure 21)**. The lead-up to the centennial celebration was by far the most important project of the year for the museum; one of the museums was Skeena Treasure House as I previously described.

While the policy change did not have an immediate profound impact on the Gitksan, it justified the time and money spent by the PMBC professional staff to support the museum activities in B.C. (RMBC, Duff 1958:C18).¹⁵⁷ In 1960, as in the past, most PMBC efforts were again put toward the Gitksan. The broadly interpreted policy would include other areas of the Gitksan, including a request for assistance from the Skeena Totem Pole Restoration Committee to build the Skeena Treasure House, precursor of the ‘Ksan project. My search of the PMBC archives

¹⁵⁶ The title mentioned is in the traditional tribal sense, not in contemporary real estate law.

¹⁵⁷ The local museum assistance program also included short visits to other museums at Penticton, Kamloops, Clinton, and Prince Rupert (RMBC, Duff 1958:C18).

found no recorded expansion of the 1956 policy, if in fact one was needed. The policy likely included a broad interpretation that was restricted more by budget constraints than by written limits. Duff spent several days with Polly Sargent and the staff in Hazelton in the first of several planning visits for the new Skeena Treasure House (PMCB, Duff 1961:B20). This was a major step in the goal of supporting the resurgence of the art of the Gitksan and the development of a new generation of professional artists who took the “rules” outlined by Holm and pushed them in new and creative directions.

Duff also made several visits to Kiwancool¹⁵⁸ to conclude the museum’s agreement with the Gitksan, turning over to them the three totem pole replicas carved at the Thunderbird Park in 1959. The main project for the summer of 1959 was carving an additional copy of the most elaborate of the three Kitwancool poles: “at the request of the Pacific Vancouver National Exhibition, the two carvers, Mungo Martin and Henry Hunt, and the pole were sent to Vancouver for the period of the exhibition, August 20th to September 5th, and *proved to be most popular*” (emphasis added). This support was the direct result of the 1956 policy change allowing professional staff of the museum to assist in the development of local museums, a support that would increase dramatically over the decade. The Annual Reports of

¹⁵⁸ *The Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool* was printed in 1959. Budget limitations led to regulating the Anthropology in British Columbia series from an annual to an occasional publication (PMCB, Duff 1960:B22). It must be pointed out that the 45-page booklet, important as its information on the Kitwasncool Gitksan is, was published as part of a negotiated legal agreement between the PMBC and the Kitwanwool in 1958 under the title: “An Agreement between the People of Kitwancool and the Provincial Museum of British Columbia Concerning Certain Totem Poles of Kitwancool.” The agreement stated that every pole removed to the museum would be replaced with an exact copy carved, returned and erected in the village (PMCB, Duff 1959:3-4), but it does not say that the obligatory potlatch to raise a totem pole was no longer recognized. For more information, see Jacknis 2002, Hawker 2003, Jonaitis and Glass 2010.

the above twelve-year period show a shift from solely totem pole restoration to an active commitment to a broader range of the Gitksan arts.

But it all began with Barbeau's initial fascination with the Gitksan totem poles and his belief in the restoration projects of the 1920s. While Barbeau was removed from the early restoration projects, his interest in the Gitksan totem poles and the Gitksan culture never wavered. As he retired from the world of scholarship, another non-Native, Polly Sargent, began to accomplish what he could not, contributing greatly to the resurgence of traditional Gitksan art. Chapter Four will show that Sargent shaped an important milestone in the history of Gitksan art and culture with the Skeena Treasure House, which would eventually expand to become part of the much larger 'Ksan project. She did not do this alone: the Provincial Museum of British Columbia, later known as the Royal British Columbia Museum, would take the huge step of becoming a patron of Gitksan art and culture. These efforts soon moved far beyond the early commercial goals of the CPR, achieving not only Barbeau's dream of a major tourist destination focused on the celebration of Native arts and culture, but a gradual revival of Gitksan art.

CHAPTER 4: POLLY SARGENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'KSAN: A NEW PARADIGM OF TRADITIONAL NORTHWEST COAST ART, FROM CEREMONY TO A CONTEMPORARY COMMERCIAL MARKET

In this chapter, I look at the resumption of the contemporary revival of Gitksan art and culture through the Gitksan tourist village of 'Ksan at Hazelton, on the shore of the Skeena River. Polly Sargent,¹⁵⁹ a non-Native married into the highly regarded Sargent family of the very small-unincorporated village of Hazelton in north central B.C., is credited as being the major force behind this ambitious project.¹⁶⁰ Following the limited success of the Skeena Treasure House, Sargent began to explore the dramatic challenges of creating a recreation complex patterned after a mid-eighteenth century Gitksan village. Known collectively as 'Ksan, the main elements of the village would include a traditional big house¹⁶¹ style building containing a very small museum, a large gift shop, and administrative offices, and another traditional styled but smaller building where the 'Ksan dancers and singers would dress and store their traditional ceremonial regalia (costumes, masks, rattles, etc.) (see Appendix C & D). The 'Ksan would also include the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art, where the establishment of traditional artistic skills would bring about a revival of traditional art objects to be sold to visiting tourists to

¹⁵⁹ More information about Polly, see footnote 16, in the Introduction.

¹⁶⁰ Hazelton, with a population of about 400 people, is about 290 kilometers (180 miles) due east of Prince Rupert, B.C.

¹⁶¹ The phrase "Big House," used by the peoples of the Northwest Coast, should not be confused with the term "Long House," used by the Woodland peoples in Eastern Canada and America.

better the life of the Gitksan Native artists and thus raise the economic level of the greater Hazelton area.

Unexpected circumstances in the mid-1960s, however, led to a fairly radical change to the local cultures of the Gitksan and the non-Natives of the areas. Sawmills, by far the largest industry in the Upper Skeena area, began shutting down, including the Hazelton Sawmill. This closure of the main employer in the area caused overwhelming economic devastation in both the Native and non-Native communities. There were simply no jobs to be had. At the time of the sawmill closures, Sargent was the mayor of Hazelton. She felt an obligation to her constituents to stimulate the local economy, but, as an astute business woman with 20 years' experience, she knew the remoteness of Hazelton would preclude attracting any new industry to the area. Realizing that no one was going to come to Hazelton just for the beautiful scenery—as all of B.C. offered this—she wanted to give tourists a different kind of experience to motivate them to come to Hazelton.

Sargent, as mayor, had official access to all levels of the Canadian government, but her first order of business was getting the approval and cooperation of the local Gitksan bands from the communities of Kitwanga, Kitwancool, Kispiox, Kitzeguecla, and Kitanmax (Hazelton) for the project. The Skeena Treasure House was a very small, local project. If it had failed, the only loss would be a little local pride. The 'Ksan project, on the other hand, was going to be large and costly, with no guarantee of success. However, none of the villagers seems to have doubted that it would succeed.

This 'Ksan project looked strikingly similar to Marius Barbeau's model plan for the National Park at Hazelton, also known as Temlaham National Park, discussed in chapters two and three. However, although the elements of Sargent's 'Ksan¹⁶² were exactly the same as Barbeau's plan, the latter did not mention the costs of the proposed project. 'Ksan's costs, on the other hand, were a constant challenge to Sargent. The 'Ksan project would only achieve success with the unprecedented financial and managerial patronage of local, provincial, and federal agencies and the British Columbia Provincial Museum (BCPM), in Victoria, B.C., and to a lesser extent the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, B.C. This combined expertise and financial support assisted Sargent in overcoming the many problems that she and the committee encountered. The project evolved under the guidance of a small cadre of Gitksan Natives and non-Natives and this was crucial to the project's success.

Under Sargent's leadership,¹⁶³ the funding for the growth of 'Ksan often required re-structuring. In the original 'Ksan business plan of the tourist village, all of the parts were governed by one 'ruling' board/committee. While gaining a "not-for-profit" tax status helped the fiscal situation, the start-up costs were far more

¹⁶² Much of Sargent's correspondence is concerned with her worries about funding. This correspondence was mainly found in the homes of her daughters Sally McMillan and Barbara Coleman, with some in the archival documents stored in the main office of the museum.

¹⁶³ One chapter of Judith Ostrowitz's *Interviews: Native American Art for Far-flung Territories* (2009) takes a cursory look at 'Ksan. She notes that Bill Sargent, Polly's husband, refers to the economic potential of Native crafts in a letter to Gordon Hilker of Attractions Ltd. in Vancouver (1950), (especially) if the crafts are marketed "in the heart of totem pole land" (Ostrowitz 2009: 132). It should be noted that while "Bill was just as enthusiastic (as Polly) about the potential market for Native handicrafts from Hazelton" (Ibid.), he remained a minor player in the development of the Skeena Treasure House and 'Ksan.

than anyone expected, and the organization needed more income to pay for day-to-day expenses. To obtain the larger government grants, Sargent decentralized 'Ksan from a single entity to one of three parts, each with its own managing board: 1) the commercial side of the village [gift shop, campground, etc.]; 2) the Kitanmax school; and 3) the 'Ksan dance company. This move would cause major problems and confusion in the future; for example, almost everyone still saw the enterprise as the single entity, 'Ksan.

The earliest material I was able to collect specifically relating to the 'Ksan project consists of an undated brief that I believe is from early 1964 and two later different briefs, one likely from later in 1964, and one dated 1965. At this early stage, Sargent boldly wrote that 'Ksan would be an ideal distribution center for "superior Indian handicrafts, carefully selected, from all over the Province" ([RBCM] Document – no date). While she made a strong presentation to D. B. Turner Deputy Minister, Department of Recreation and Conservation, Turner believed that 'Ksan was just too remote to be considered as the distribution center for the Northwest Coast art¹⁶⁴ and crafts.

There is no documentation on this, but based on my interviews with Sargent's daughters on the subject of their mother's business acumen, she likely made an initial "market survey" of Native made objects in the tourist areas of Vancouver and Victoria. In the early 1960s, very few shops or galleries existed that were devoted to the arts of the Northwest Coast. One of the earliest exceptions was Hill's Native Art

¹⁶⁴ In the beginning, Sargent did not distinguish between "superior Indian handicrafts" and art. However, she did foresee "a production center for Indian handicraft both old and new" ([STHC] 'Ksan proposal, circa early 1965). Later she tried to sell the idea that 'Ksan should be the "clearing house" for all Northwest Coast art (Ibid.).

Gallery (formally Hill's Indian Crafts), which had been in business since 1946 with four locations in Vancouver Island; Victoria, Vancouver, Nanaimo and Duncan (see <http://hillsnativeart.com>). The first known Native-owned business was the *Talking Stick* by Kwakwaka'wakw artist Douglas Cranmer and Peter Scow in Vancouver. They opened the shop in 1963, but closed by the end of 1965, due to the lack of popular consumer interest in top quality Native art. Cranmer is quoted as saying, "We learned too late that it was the junk that paid the rent" (Macnair [1978]). Cranmer became a short-term instructor at 'Ksan in 1967, making the probability high of his meeting Sargent early in the process. It is also highly possible that he influenced Sargent to sell "junk" later when the village opened.¹⁶⁵ Clearly, handicrafts would help pay rent. However, the reader should not take the meaning of the word "junk" literally. High quality handicrafts rise above junk status, but cannot be identified as fine art. Nor should the reader assume the adjective "authenticity" be the sole purview of art objects or even handicrafts.¹⁶⁶ When speaking of Native made objects, 'junk' can most assuredly be "authentic" also.

The word "authenticity" took on a meaning far beyond that found in dictionaries. Alice Ravenhill, founder of the British Columbia Indian Arts and Welfare Society (BCIAWS) in 1939, ascribed "authenticity ... as being the basis for quality control" (Hawker 2003: 173-4) for Native art. Hawker saw little value in the

¹⁶⁵ I suggest that some of conjecturing found in this paper is directly related to faded memories.

¹⁶⁶ To define what is art, handicraft, or junk is beyond the scope of this study, for several reasons: The first is the shifting view within each category, which is often set by object availability. The second is the increasing education and disposable income of the buyers. This factor sets the market price for any artist's work, and, in turn, identifies to average degree what is art. While this is an imperfect method, it works. Case in point is the work of deceased Haida artist Bill Reid: after his death, his work, already extremely expensive, arguably became the most expensive of any of today's contemporary artists.

strategies of Ravenhill and the BCIAWS to create a new meaning for authenticity, beyond being “paternalistic” (Ibid.). While Hawker has done much to promote knowledge of the First Nations of the Northwest Coast, I cannot agree with Hawker. The BCIAWS suggested in 1939 that the BCPM establish criteria for what would be called “Indian art”¹⁶⁷ (Ibid.). While BCIAWS would issue a “stamp of authenticity” (Ibid.), control would be with the government or its designee, but “certainly not with First Nations leaders or artists” (Ibid.).¹⁶⁸

On these market survey trips to Vancouver Polly no doubt understood the importance of validating the authenticity of the art as made by Native artists. She and the 'Ksan Association, while not certifying the authenticity of its handicrafts, would give its products a “trade mark.” Sargent strongly believed that “authenticity was of prime importance and that a major reason Native handicrafts did not sell in the quantity they should, and at the price they should, was that the buyer had no guarantee of authenticity or quality” ([STHC] Undated brief by the 'Ksan Village Committee). In reading her correspondence and through interviews of those who knew her best, we know she believed this completely. There is no evidence that Polly’s approach to authenticity was paternalistic. Authenticity as an issue is as important now as it was then.

¹⁶⁷ Of course, Ravenhill and the BCIAWS were influential in areas beyond the issue of authenticity, especially in promoting Native student artists such as Gitksan painter Judith Morgan. Morgan, born in Kitwanga in 1930, left Kitwanga in the 1940s to study at the Kansas City Art Institute and later completed a degree at the University of Kansas (“Judith Morgan” in *BC Archives, Royal BC Museum*. See <http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/exhitigs/timemarch/galler03/frames/morgan.htm>). She returned to Kitwanga in 1983 but was never associated with 'Ksan. Other artists showcased by the BCIAWS include George Clutesi, Ellen Neel, and Sis-hu-lk (Francois Baitiste). The BCIAWS also sponsored Native art exhibitions in Canada and Alaska.

¹⁶⁸ For an excellent look at why native artists need to label their creativity authentic (see Duffek 1983:99-111; and Jacknis 2002:201-206).

First Nations art and artists have been confronting the same issues and challenges. Ironically, part of the dilemma facing First Nations artists is the core issue of being called First Nations artists or Native artists, linking them more to a cultural heritage, than to artistic heritage that is cultural in nature. This issue brings up the dual problems of authenticity and hybridity, relating to an identity and representation from outside of their existence. The production of their work is often a question of 'Indianness' and 'looking Native,' rather than a question of artistic achievement. Because of the problem of identity, their work can be excluded in the mainstream art galleries or museums, while at that same time the market place demands 'Indianness' to be a certificate of their authenticity as commodity. However, it is not just the market place that demands proof of authenticity, some museums such as the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis, Indiana, require that most if not all Native American art displayed there be by documented Native Americans. There is also the problem of tribal identity. There are some exhibition/sales venues that not only demand that First Nations artists be documented, but the artist must stay within the artist boundaries of his or her tribe (Soodeen, J. *Saanich News*, August 11, 2000:1, 8).

Unfortunately, these artists are the by-products of socio-political changes and oppression of the Native history of the past. They live in, and are a part of, a very complex Western society. For instance, some artists live on reservations or reserves; some live in urban environments; and some artists are trained through a traditional master/student system; while some are trained through a Western formal art educational system. Longfish and Randall made this point:

From artist's point of view ... Statements [about diversity] are logical reflections of Indian reality. The experiences of the artists as Indian people are as rich and varied as the Native American tribes and nations which remain on this continent. They approach each other seeking to share their differences and to compare their similarities ... The assumption among them is that they are Indian; they do not concern themselves with having their art look Indian (1983:n.p.).

The predicament for contemporary First Nations artists is that they often are pawns in the power struggle between the art market and dominant politics.

However, recent academic literature have contested this notion of 'authenticity' and 'hybridity.' Anthropologist Aaron Glass states, "The concept that 'pure' Indian cultures once existed but became irredeemably polluted as a result of contact with non-Native peoples adheres to this now-discarded paradigm of authenticity being equated with the past" (Jonaitis and Glass 2010:7).¹⁶⁹ Glass further suggests that:

... like other examples of material culture, transcends its apparently static materiality and becomes part of the history of intercultural understanding and mutual respect, as well as misunderstanding and ambivalence. This dynamic process, underlies the fundamental colonial paradox regarding indigenous arts: the tension between trends toward appreciation and appropriation. That is, the process of learning to appreciate Native material culture as fine art is usually accompanied by the practices of collecting it for museums, commodifying it for local and international markets, and claiming it as an -- perhaps *the* -- essential component of national heritage (Ibid., 7-8).

I strongly agree with his opinion. Moreover, art historian Bill Anthes made his argument on the intercultural nature of modernism by examining how each Native artist fuse Native American art and Western art conventions in their painting (Anthes 2006:142-181). The 'hybridity' nature of Native American artists' paintings

¹⁶⁹ For more information, see White (1991); Pratt (1992); Clifford (1997).

is the primary basis for Anthes's definition of Native American modernism and his vision for the nature of modernism itself. Even though 'Ksan artists who live in a small community, they have been dealing with and confronting the same issues as Native artists in the 20th and 21st century.

An examination of the three progressive briefs of the period (undated) reveals that the 'Ksan committee was not only looking at producing local Native crafts objects, but was evaluating all Native-produced items found in the average tourist gift shop in British Columbia or Alaska. Specifically,

We propose to develop saleable articles such as seed bracelets and necklaces, Indian puppet dolls, carved bone "soul-catcher" charms, woven wall hangings with the "eye" design, Mukluks for after ski ware, trump line belts, Indian "ice cream," purees of wild berries in birch-covered containers, miniature "grease" boxes for piggy banks, and, and, and, there's no end to what could be done in old 'Ksan.¹⁷⁰ (Ibid.)

Their plans for producing objects for sale evolved quickly, and while they still called everything they might make "handicrafts," they soon began to discuss creating traditional arts of the Gitksan people. In another undated brief dedicated to handicrafts, which I believe could belong to the next generation of proposals; we learn that one of the objectives was:

to make the trade mark 'Ksan synonymous with excellence in genuine Indian-made handicrafts, thereby raising the price level so that every handicraft producer receives a just wage . . . Some articles which can be made and sold (include) carved wooden ladles and spoons, carved painted or plain; wooden bowls, carved or plain; wooden trays, carved, painted or plain; masks; plaques; rattles; horns; charms; daggers; talking sticks; papoose carriers, totem poles . .

¹⁷⁰ At the beginning of the project, the committee decided the project should be called "old Ksan" to distinguish it from the Alaskan community by the name of Kasaan. The name never caught on. As often is the case Northwest Coast names have more than one spelling. For example, I have in my collection and original pen and ink drawings by the artist Chadier (no first name) in 1888 the Alaskan island village of "Kasa-an, spelled with hyphen.

. cedar bark baskets . . . miniature totemic figures and spruce root baskets.
(Ibid.)

The list of possible objects is quite long. It is obvious that they had a number of “brain storming” sessions in which the committee was building on the original concept, envisioning a “house of the workers” where “genuine Native handicrafts will be seen in the making.” It is especially important to note that the artists, either as fine art artists or craft makers, were to “receive” a just wage. As Don Abbott noted, this decision, based on their desire to create a business in the form of a commune,” ultimately was a disaster for the burgeoning ‘Ksan project (Don Abbott interview, May 19, 2002).

The proposal briefs were given to the Indian Affairs Branch, Indian Band Councils, the Municipal Council of Smithers, Telkwa, Houston, Terrace, Kitimat, Burns Lake, Vande Roof, Prince George, the Chamber of Commerce for highway 16, Alaska, and the Honorable Arthur Langué. Soon, everyone except for two of the councils had endorsed the project ([RBCM] Whyte to all interested parties, December 5, 1966). Sometime after January 1, 1967, all the needed endorsements were approved, a budget was in place, and the application package was sent to D. B. Turner, Deputy Minister of the Department of Recreation and Conservation,¹⁷¹ applying for funding from the Agriculture Rural Development Act (ARDA) (Don Abbott interview, May 19, 2002). The application was endorsed and recommended as the first enterprise for the new British Columbia Rural Development Project

¹⁷¹ It is important to note that the B.C. Provincial Museum fell under the control of the Department of Recreation and Conservation.

under ARDA ([RBCM] Turner to the Deputy Ministers Committee, re: Hazelton proposal, May 29, 1967). In his letter to Sargent informing her of the decision, Turner requested a new plan for the organization of the project. Sargent was quick to respond to the request. The suggestion that relates to this study is as follows:

Page 2, 4b Procure the services of a paid “Master Carver” to carve essential pieces which cannot be obtained as “originals” such as mortuary poles, large scale food bowls, etc. This man could also give classes in carving. Such a man has been approved. (The adult education people are willing to sponsor the carving courses). ([RBCM] Sargent to Turner, June 12, 1967).

The adult education carving classes noted above did not happen, nor were any Gitksan master carvers to be found. Rather, it was the *idea for the position* (emphasis added), not a specific person, that had been “approved” by the village (Ibid). However, at that point, all requests for personal positions had to be approved by Turner, so Sargent’s was little more than a positive suggestion. As early as in 1945 the National Geographic Magazine in an article entitled “Indians of Our Northwest Coast” proclaimed “totem-pole art now extinct,” it stated that, “as a result of ever-increasing contacts with the whites, Native culture had broken down. The most recent poles erected in the Upper Skeena River area at the time of article were Gitksan” (Stirling, M. W. 1945:30). Today totem poles are being created throughout the Northwest Coast, from northern Oregon to southern Alaska.

On the other hand, Leslie Dawn, in his master’s thesis, states that because there are poles still standing, the carving traditions are not forgotten. I contend that if one carves a pole without the understanding of what they are doing in complex aesthetic terms, it is not the same pole. To reinforce this point, I note Peter Macnair’s discussion of the ‘Ksan carvers. Without any knowledgeable Tsimshian

artists living, any semblance of the old apprenticeship system was impossible (at 'Ksan). Qualified instructors, both Native and non-Native, were brought in to instruct. "Unfortunately," Macnair argues, "none of teachers had full command of Tsimshian art forms, especially the sculpture, and as a result, three-dimensional objects produced at 'Ksan lack the tranquil refinement of older pieces" (Macnair, Hoover and Neary 1980:93).

This has been the view of all the non-Gitksan artists interviewed. However, I disagree that the work of all graduates from the school fit this description. From my research, many of the early students went on to create poles, masks, rattles, etc., are, in my opinion, as good as any of the early traditional art. Unfortunately, many of these artists such as are growing old. Some of the best who attended 'Ksan such as Chief Walter Harris and Freda Diesing (Haida), have died. The following evaluation made by Freda Diesing is particularly revealing of the stakes here: "If you look at the old totem poles, then look at the new poles at Kispiox by Walter Harris and Earl Muldon [both 'Ksan graduates and later instructors at the School], they are not like the old ones. They are a kind of a combination of what they learned through 'Ksan, from Bill Holm's book, or from pictures from books photographs are the least productive to learn from" (Freda Diesing, interview, May 17, 2002).

Following Turner's letter to Sargent informing her of the endorsement of her application, there must have been communication between Turner and G. Clifford Carl, Director of the Provincial Museum, for in a letter from Carl responding to Turner, he stated, "I understand that Mrs. Polly Sargent of Hazelton has requested advice regarding totem pole restoration problems in the Hazelton area, and that you

have indicated to her that our branch may be of help” ([RBCM] Carl to Turner, July 12, 1967). This letter clearly indicates a breakdown in communication. While Sargent did want assistance with Gitksan totem pole restoration, this was a completely different project than ‘Ksan. It is obvious that the full scope of the project was not understood by anyone, including Polly. What Polly really wanted was assistance with totem pole restoration *and* every phase of ‘Ksan, especially finding qualified carving instructors. Any ambiguity would soon change.

On July 21, 1967 a meeting between Turner, Allen (from ARDA), and H. G. McWilliams, Director, Parks Branch, DRC was held to define priorities. Priority I.a.a (2) states, “Reference is made here to the training in handicrafts that should be commenced (in) September or October this year. It is not known at the moment how long this training will take, but it is a key part of the ‘Ksan project” ([RBCM] Turner to Allen and McWilliams). The training in handicrafts did not take place.

Turner, et al. still did not appear to understand the project nor what it would entail. Don Abbott, Curator of Anthropology at the Provincial Museum was appointed supervisor of the ‘Ksan project by the Director of Provincial Museum, G. Clifford Carl. Abbot was the first person from either the provincial government or from Hazelton to fully understand the enormity of the project or how to develop a realistic plan for implementing Sargent’s vision of a financially successful Gitksan art community, proud of their heritage and proud of their work. But Sargent was impatient, always wanting more progress and more creativity. The collective

correspondence¹⁷² suggests that Sargent was so consumed by the positive approach needed to sell the project to all constituents who could veto the project that, in the beginning, she had little insight as to how to proceed with the mechanics of the project. Abbott effectively managed the project for the next few years. At the time of my interview with Abbott, he could not remember how much time he devoted to the 'Ksan project, but it must have been near full time for a long period (Interview Don Abbott, May 19, 2002). Of course, his work at the museum suffered.

The Provincial Museum, as an entity under the control of Department of Recreation and Conservation, was responsible for making the 'Ksan project a reality, and Abbott's task was to make it happen. In Abbott's first communication to Turner, he shares his thoughts on the 'Ksan project:¹⁷³

I believe that we could be of considerable assistance . . . with the craft program . . . Confidentially, I am afraid that the Aboriginal carving tradition of the Gitksan and of the rest of the Tsimshian has effectively died out so it is necessary to treat this as a "revival"¹⁷⁴. . . It would be a good idea to try to obtain the services of two professional Indian carvers . . . though [not] Tsimshian, I am thinking specifically of Doug Cranmer, the Kwakiutl [Kwakwaka' wakw] carver and Bob Davidson, a young Haida who has been apprenticing under Bill Reid . . .

¹⁷² Most of the correspondence is in possession of Sargent's daughters, Barbara Coleman and Sally McMillian.

¹⁷³ In the interview, Abbot stated that he first became "unofficially" involved in the 'Ksan project in 1965. Perhaps that is why he seemed to know so much about the project when Turner approached him (Don Abbott interview, May 19, 2002).

¹⁷⁴ Macnair adds, "the subtle nuances which combined to create the great (Tsimshian) masterpieces passed from practice about 1910, although a handful of craftsman continued to produce rough facsimiles into the 1940's. However, so little had survived by then that the art was, for all intents and purposes, lost" (Macnair, Hoover and Neary 1984:93). However, Leslie Dawn strongly disagrees with the argument that the activity surrounding the 'Ksan project was a revival, always using the word "revival" in quotation marks (Dawn 1981). He prefers the word, "resurgence" without adequately explaining the subtle differences in the two words. Dawn's position, however, cannot explain the fact that Gitksan carvers could not be found to teach Gitksan style carving.

Abbot goes on to address the problem of Polly's identification of the village site as having archaeological value: "I have now checked into this, and find that we have no record of a site at that particular spot, and it is rather unlikely to find one there since the ground is low and subject to flooding" ([RBCM] Abbott to Turner, July 28, 1967). George MacDonald, who was the west coast archaeologist at the National Museum of Canada, had the same opinion: "I looked at these flats and found only occasional evidence of fish camps, etc. It's too bad that we have so much evidence for other sites, and they pick this one" ([RBCM] MacDonald to Abbot, January 4, 1968). These findings contradict all of Sargent's correspondence, promotional material, and newspaper accounts. For example, the 1965 proposal briefs state that the village "would be constructed on the former site of an early Gitksan village." This statement, rather than being based on real archaeological facts, seems to be another tactic used by Sargent and others to help to sell the project to the politicians.

As stated above, the handicraft training was to have started in September or October 1967 ([RBCM] Meeting minutes from Turner to Allen and McWilliams, July 21 1967). In November 1967, Turner was hopeful that Sargent would soon "send down recommendations, re: teacher, of Indian handicraft . . . Mr. Abbott may be able to assist with his recommendations" ([RBCM] Turner to Allen, November 10, 1967). Later in the month, at a meeting of what would be later called the 'Ksan Advisory Committee,¹⁷⁵ Abbott reported that in addition to the carving training, there would

¹⁷⁵ While the term "advisory" was always used to describe the committee, this was disingenuous, as the committee controlled the funding and had the professional expertise needed to successfully

now be training in two-dimensional design making. Abbott suggested that “Bill Holm of Seattle, author of the book, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* should be used in the training program ... Bob Davidson, artist, might (also) be used in the training program” ([RBCM] Joe Awmack, Rural Development Officer, to Advisory Committee, November 21, 1967). Abbott also recommended the inclusion of Tlingit dancer/carver Nathan Jackson, who had gone to the Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He goes on to state that “careful selection of candidates for carving, etc. would be very important” (Ibid.). Jackson would eventually come to ‘Ksan, but as a dancer, not a carving instructor (Nathan Jackson interview, November 15, 2002).

Due to the complexity of the project, a tight schedule, and, more importantly, a tight budget, the planning was not linear. In keeping with Barbeau’s plan, which called for tourist accommodations, Sargent and the ‘Ksan Committee wanted to develop a campground for automobile camping. With only one hotel in Hazelton, the Committee thought the campground necessary for the success of the ‘Ksan project. To accomplish this, more money was needed and, once again, Sargent was successful in obtaining funding from ARDA. But this time, ARDA required that ‘Ksan be split into two areas and gave them separate account numbers: first, an art-training program (not an art school); and second, the village and campsite. The training program was labeled as a trade school to be part of the Canadian Manpower Program. And so, while Polly was successful at finding the money, she failed to see the future ramifications of splitting off the training program (as we shall later

complete the project. Sargent had the innate political skills to know when to push and when not to; she knew that without the help of the committee, there would be no village.

see.)¹⁷⁶ However, if Polly wanted an arts training program, she had to accept whatever conditions were presented to her ([STHC] 'Ksan committee minutes, n.d.). Sargent always knew the training program was the key to 'Ksan's initial success. The program became known as the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art. In reading Polly's correspondence of the period, it appears that she may have thought the split in funding applied only to the start-up costs, or perhaps she believed she would eventually regain control.¹⁷⁷

In the beginning, these changes made no difference, as she controlled all budgets. But the separate boards eventually led to political problems, such as fiscal control over shrinking budgets. The minutes contain no reference to discussion about the separate boards for the new two-tier restructuring. Polly may initially have been confused by some of the conditions, or perhaps ARDA did not explain the facts as well as they should have, because later, the new boards were to be "separate but equal"—but it quickly became clear the two committees were very separate and certainly not equal. For example, the school received revenue from the students' tuition and from Manpower, and because the students were in the Manpower Program, they also got a monthly stipend. In the beginning 'Ksan the village did very well because wood carvings—such as totem poles, student-carved jewelry, and the women's craft items cited below—were sold by the 'Ksan village gift shop, which received a percentage of the profits. The students quickly rebelled

¹⁷⁶ The village now has its own account number, as do the 'Ksan dancers.

¹⁷⁷ Originally Sargent thought of 'Ksan as a form of an Israel Kibbutz, wherein any profit seen would be shared by all. However, very soon she began to see 'Ksan as a "normal" business venture, a not-for-profit corporation of sorts, with herself as the CEO. The biggest problem came when the cash flow was not sufficient to cover the payroll, especially in the beginning, when the art students were also the carpenters, electricians, labors, etc. (Duane Pasco interview, May 15, 2002).

against sharing the profits, instead wanting the gift shop to buy the carvings at the same retail prices as the tourist shops in Vancouver and Victoria. The gift shop refused as this would tie up too much of their money in their inventory. The student carvers also assumed that the gift shop should buy everything they produced. The gift shop, already having a small profit margin, simply could not carry products they could not sell, and almost overnight, student-carved objects disappeared from the gift shop. Totem pole sales, however, were different. The students *needed* Sargent and 'Ksan, for Sargent was the link to any totem pole sales (emphasis added). She found the customers and she set the wholesale price that included negotiating the actual retail price. Importantly, she also selected the students who were to work on the projects (Laurel Mould interview, July 20, 2002).

Abbott, now working full time on 'Ksan, presented a long report to the Advisory Committee.¹⁷⁸ I have condensed the report as follows:

1. Knowledge of women's crafts were "not quite dead" especially in areas such as birch-bark basketry, skin work (moccasins, shirts, etc.) beadwork, and to a lesser degree, red cedar bark weaving. Sargent had found a Haida woman to do spruce root basketry. Instructors were needed for wool weaving, yellow cedar bark instructor, and appliqué work. Chilkat weaving instruction was available from a white woman in Portland, Oregon,¹⁷⁹ but it may not economically feasible.¹⁸⁰
2. The situation of traditional men's arts was much more drastic because of the death of most traditional skills "due to a failure to train apprentices over the last few generations ... it is clear that knowledge of Gitksan iconography has been totally lost." However, there were a few expert teachers, while not

¹⁷⁸ I worked with Don Abbott for nearly three weeks on and off. He also gave me all of his records and correspondence related to 'Ksan (Interview May 19, 2002).

¹⁷⁹ Abbott was referring to Doris Gruber, a participant in the workshops of 1967 at Carl Heinmiller's facility in Haines, Alaska.

¹⁸⁰ Chilkat robes would later be briefly taught at 'Ksan.

precisely in the Gitksan style, who could teach.

3. Because of the total lack of local carvers, Abbott had contacted Bill Holm who could work some weekends during the winter and spring, and more during the summer. Bill Reid, while busy is willing to devote a very few days to the project. Bob (Robert) Davidson will be at art school until the end of May. It is hoped that he could do a few weekends during that time and then go full time for several months, starting in June.
4. Bill Reid suggested creating a book of designs that would be given to the students for simple copying as they make designs for silk screening, box designs, leatherwork, etc., Reid, Holm, Davidson and possibly others could contribute to this.¹⁸¹ Holm also ordered 12-18 copies of his book, *Northwest Coast Indian Art*.¹⁸²
5. Strong recommendation for Sargent, Doreen Jensen, and someone from the Provincial Museum to visit Carl Heinmiller's Alaska Indian Arts Inc. at Haines,¹⁸³ which trains Indians to carve totem poles, grease dishes, and rattles

¹⁸¹ I have found a set of the design elements in the Royal British Columbia Museum archives made only by Bill Holm, never by Bill Reid (Personal communication, May 16, 2002). Much later in another interview with Holm, I asked if he had considered writing a new edition to his formline design book to include the thoughts of Steve Brown (a protégée of Holm's from an early age) and others. I particularly pushed for the use of color to delineate the design elements (Ibid.).

¹⁸² Abbott had also sent his report to Sargent, and she responded, "Frankly I think that ten copies of Bill Holm's excellent book would do the trick. Not ten of my gang will be able to comprehend it. I was talking with one of our pedagogues, who have at least average intelligence, and he said he could not 'get' it" ([RBCM] Sargent to Abbott, December 19, 1967). Although it is not an easy book to read, it is extremely important to understand. The use of color would have helped immensely. I have not found any contributions attributed to Sargent in the reports.

¹⁸³ In 1902 the United States built an Army Base at Port Chilkoot near the town of Haines, Alaska. First named Fort William H. Seward, but later, because of the confusion with the city of Seaward, Alaska, the name changed to the Chilkoot Barracks. Never to see action against a hostile aggressor, the fort was closed after World War II (WWII), and put up for sale (Patty, *The Seattle Times*, December 17, 1972).

Four WWII veterans and a friend, looking for a different kind of challenge, found out the fort was for sale and thinking that the area had excellent potential for tourist enterprises, bought the fort in April 1947. While the vision of a tourist center was grand, it was much more difficult to develop than expected. Carl Heinmiller, one of the original five, had some successful experience working with the native peoples of Fiji in WWII, but working with the Native people of the area proved to be extremely arduous, they did not trust non-Native people in general, and especially anyone who wanted to make a tourist attraction using their culture.

Always interested in the boy scout movement, he started working with the local Native teenagers from Haines and Klukwan, hoping to make a traditional dance group as one of their projects. Knowing nothing of the culture, he assumed that the Native elders would help in the instruction, but they refused. Not easily discouraged, Heinmiller took the scout troop to museums. Part of the boy scout movement is to experience projects that help build character. He hoped that by seeing the beautiful, skillfully carved art of the elders from their past, they would become interested

for sale, and visit the Indian leather working factory at Curve Lake, Ontario ([RBCM] Abbott to Advisory Committee, December II, 1967).

The length and depth of the report are evidence that the anniversary committee selected the right person for this very complicated task. Much of 'Ksan's success was due to Abbott.

in their heritage. Heinmiller was reported to be "talented carver, and soon he was doing excellent reproductions" to show the boys that it could be done, and soon they were engaged in craft making (Clausen, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, September 3, 1972).

Gradually Heinmiller gained the confidence of the elders, and they began to help him with the projects, and especially, with the dancing. While he was gaining the trust of Native people, he began to emerge as the only one of the original investor group who still had the vision of a tourist attraction. He was astute enough to know if he were going to make a success of the business, he would have to gain the attention of the political people in government, the arts of Alaska, and the Alaskan Native organization. Heinmiller pushed for incorporation, and 1956 Port Chilkoot was declared a second-class city. He was elected mayor, a position he held until the city consolidated with Haines in 1970 (Patty, *The Seattle Times*, December 17, 1972). Shortly after incorporation, he changed business tactics. While he did not have the personal money needed to achieve his dream, the dream never changed. In 1957 he established the non-profit corporation, Alaska Youth Inc., under the Alaskan laws pertaining to education, welfare, and art.

... For the purpose of reviving, perpetuating and expanding the arts, music, dances and crafts of the Alaska Tlingit Indian, aiding the economic development of the Indian people, and re-establishing pride in their cultural heritage ... so essential in their present period of economic and social crisis and transition²⁶ (*Project Proposal, Alaska Youth, Inc.*, May 15, 1960).

In securing his non-profit status, he was able to apply for grants, getting the working capital that he could not get before. He was also gaining the outside attention he needed for success.

Carl Heinmiller, a white businessman and boy scout leader at Port Chilkoot, with the approval and guidance of the older Indians ... turned to Chilkat crafts and lore for his scouting material. This spread beyond its original aims and today has created a general renaissance of Chilkat culture (Rogers 1960: 268).

Responding to the mandates of the non-profit status concerning education and art, aided by several smaller grants, Heinmiller started an "earn and learn" program where the students were in effect the construction workers building and "authentic tribal house" which would be used for dance presentations and other business (*Project Proposal for Alaska Youth Inc.*, May 15, 1960: 10).

In 1957 Heinmiller took the boy scout "Chilkat Dancers" now very excited to dance, to the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The National publicity brought pride to the Chilkat community. Later, in 1959, the dancers went to the Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonials in Gallup, New Mexico, and won the Grand Prize for dancing.

As time went on, the success of the Alaska Indian Art Inc. was dependent to some degree on the availability of grants, but they were also moderately successful from the revenue of sales of student produced traditional art, dancing performances of the Chilkat Dancers, and from large commissions, mainly totem poles, to clients in Alaska, the lower forty eight states of America, Japan, Europe, etc.

In December 1967, Abbott sent Philip Ward¹⁸⁴ and George Moore from the museum to visit Heinmiller and the Alaska Indian Arts Inc. at Haines. They returned full of praise for Heinmiller's work (Don Abbott interview, May 19, 2002).¹⁸⁵ In a letter to Heinmiller,¹⁸⁶ Abbott stated, "We feel strongly that the success of this venture, the 'Ksan project, can be better assured by personal inspection of a couple of the projects such as your own that have already proven themselves." He went on to ask if Sargent, Doreen Jensen,¹⁸⁷ and either Ward or himself could visit Heinmiller's program ([RBCM] Abbott to Heinmiller, December 14, 1967). In response, Heinmiller briefly described his program, giving percentages of success to each training subject area, such as salesmanship. He called his last category, putting

¹⁸⁴ Philip Ward worked for Don Abbott at the British Columbia Provincial Museum beginning in 1966 as the museum's first trained conservator. Ward left the museum in 1977 (Jacknis 2002: 218). He went on to work as a Northwest Coast material culture conservator and someone who was sensitive to Native desire for local control. For example, he suggested to museum director Clifford Carl "that Indian material ... such as totem poles ... should be in their hands" (March 20, 1967). After leaving the museum, Ward wrote an excellent monograph entitled *The Poles of Kitwanga* (1989), but it was not published. It contains many references to Polly Sargent and 'Ksan (Ward, Philip 1989: 24, 30-33, 36, 39-40, 42-44 and 83).

¹⁸⁵ Ward also included that he and Moore were impressed with Heinmiller's dance group, especially with Tlingit traditional dancer, Nathan Jackson. Today Nathan Jackson is respected as one of the most accomplished Tlingit carvers. He has worked solely on commissioned work for many years, and his poles are sold in many countries.

¹⁸⁶ Heinmiller kept good records of his correspondence on 'Ksan. The records are now in the keeping of his son Lee Heinmiller in Haines, Alaska.

¹⁸⁷ Doreen Jensen, Nee Hahl Yee (her Gitxan name belongs to the killer whale crest from the House of Geel of the Fireweed Clan) receives little recognition for her contributions that helped make a success of 'Ksan in the early years. Political activist, artist, curator, writer, teacher, historian, and a tireless cultural leader, Jensen was a founding member of the 'Ksan Village Association and the Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry. A champion of bringing recognition to Native professional women and especially women artists, she was awarded the Golden Eagle Feather from the Professional Native Women's Association. While her quiet strengths were overshadowed by the gregarious, aggressive Sargent, she had no problem sharing the spotlight with her. When Jensen wrote the important book *Robes of Power*, she included Sargent in the authorship (Jensen and Sargent:1986). However, when asked what Sargent knows about button blankets, Jensen simply replied, "Not much" (Personal communication, May 18, 2002).

the total amount at 120 percent, “inspirational efforts:”

This is a pure gift. This last 20 percent is what I hear Mrs. Polly Sargent and others provide. I sincerely doubt whether any (western pedagogical model of an) Indian art program will work without the dedication of the White man’s effort as the key.¹⁸⁸ Our Tlingit have ability but when trained, like any ethnic group tend to see greater opportunities in fields not connected with their early life ([RBCM] Heinmiller to Abbott, December 22, 1967).

Abbott sent his report with the names of the approved carving instructors to be considered (recommending three) to Sargent, but Abbott was concerned that students would not attend class in the summer, as they usually went to the coast to fish. “If Bob [Davidson] is there [at ‘Ksan], will he have anyone to teach?”¹⁸⁹ ([RBCM] Abbott to Sargent, December 12, 1967). By the January 1, 1968, Abbott only had the assured instructional services of Bill Holm for the weekend of January 20, 1968 (*Smithers Pictorial*, January 9, 1968: 1) and Kwakwaka’wakw Chief Tony Hunt, to start March 16, 1968, for two weeks (*Smithers Pictorial*, March 13, 1968: 6). For several months in various official memos and other correspondence, Abbott said that Bill Reid was to be part of the project. But by the end of the first week of January, he received a very blunt rejection from Reid:

Don, I really cannot develop any interest in or enthusiasm about that Hazelton

¹⁸⁸ While the Institute of American Indian Art, the oldest school with a four-year bachelor’s degree program in America, was founded by non-Natives, Heinmiller’s blatantly patronizing sexist and racist remarks are unfortunately found in every culture that I know. Certainly they are ingrained in the Japanese treatment of my people, the Ainu. Clearly, non-Native people are capable of developing, initiating, and completing an art education program. There are many examples of Native instructors in college and university settings that have important and meaningful programs that are popular with both Native and non-Natives. For example, Marvin Oliver (Quinault/Isleta-Pueblo) has been teaching Northwest Coast style art at the University of Washington for many years.

¹⁸⁹ The main, legitimate reason for ‘Ksan absenteeism was different than that of the students from IALA: ‘Ksan students went fishing, a major source of their annual income, or to work in the fish cannery, while IALA students left for the fall ceremonies. However, both groups of students also left for other than legitimate reasons.

affair. I think it is an ill conceived, impractical waste of time and money on everyone's part, and I do not see why I should throw any of my time away on it. In twenty years, I, with a pretty good increment of intelligence and talent, have perhaps begun to be able to create some good things in the Haida convention, only to find that now my only impulse is to give it all up and start over being a citizen of my own century. That program is going to produce nothing but a pile of junk, and god knows the world has enough of that already, and I want no responsibility in its creation. I could go on, but I think you pretty well know my views on the subject, so I will just ask to be left out of the whole project, and ask also not to be asked to participate in any way, as instructor, advisor or in preparation of designs or anything else ([RBCM] Reid to Abbott, January 5, 1968).

Abbott replied, "I understand your misgivings, I only hope that most of your predictions turn out to be wrong . . . of course the thing is committed and I have no choice but to go along with it, and do my best to make it work"¹⁹⁰ ([RBCM] Abbott to Reid, January 10, 1968). Abbott's at this point had only a total of 12 working days of instruction covered, and they were already behind in the instruction schedule by several months. Although it was obvious that Reid was not interested, Abbott made another timid offer to Reid, as if he didn't quite understand Reid's intent, "Your letter gave the impression . . . that you would prefer to wash your hands of it altogether. But, if you wish to give it some consideration, a few designs to be used in the folio which you originally suggested would be greatly valued" (Ibid.). It is obvious that Abbott was using a subtle application of guilt, hoping against hope that by some miracle, Reid might change his mind. He did not!

While Abbott was clearly disappointed at Reid's response, he was now much

¹⁹⁰ While Sargent certainly deserves all the credit for creating the idea of 'Ksan, Don Abbott is clearly the 'unsung hero' of helping to create 'Ksan. In my many interviews with Abbott, he never displayed any disappointment that he was not recognized for the many thing he did to make 'Ksan a success. I once asked him, "The project is so big and so complex, and this was in addition to your normal work, how did you feel about the added work load?" He paused and said, "Well, it was my job" (Interview Don Abbott May 19, 2002).

more concerned about Robert Davidson. Robert was in the Vancouver School of Art (now the Emily Carr College of Art and Design) at the time, and was still thought to be Reid's protégé. Would Reid tell Robert not to waste his time creating "a pile of junk"? Abbott, in another letter to Reid, closes it with a plea: "I hope too that Bob Davidson's participation will not be lost because we are very much counting on him to carry the ball up there at least from June" (Ibid.). Davidson would go on to teach at the 'Ksan, but not on the weekends as people had hoped.

With the loss of Reid, Abbott moved quickly to try and replace him, but there were few options. Abbott was assured that Davidson would teach; but Davidson, while an accomplished argillite carver, had not yet attained the status of a master carver (Robert Davidson interview, May 18, 2002). Abbott thought a master carver¹⁹¹ would help insure success at 'Ksan. Finally he thought of Don Lelooska Smith.¹⁹² Lelooska had gained respect as a great carver but more importantly he was an acknowledged friend of Kwakwaka'wakw Chief James Sewid. Abbott, under a great deal of stress, sent a carefully worded letter to Lelooska asking if they could visit him at his studio in Washington State ([RBCM] Abbott to Don Lelooska Smith, January 14, 1968).

On February 1, Sargent, Joe Awmack, Rural Development Officer, ARDA, and

¹⁹¹ While the term "master carver" was never defined, several carvers such as Bill Reid, Don Smith, Bill Holm, Tony Hunt, Doug Cranmer, Henry Hunt and Mungo Martin were considered to be master carvers. Only the older established artists were thought to be 'eligible.'

¹⁹² Don Smith was part Cherokee, but received the name "Lelooska," which means "Whittling Boy" or "He Who Cuts Against Wood with a Knife" from the Nez Perce people. In the mid-1960s, Chief James Sewid met Lelooska at a potlatch at Alert Bay and commissioned a mask of "Kwee-kwis" (Falk 1976:8-9). Impressed by the mask and Smith's dancing, the two families became close friends. At a potlatch in 1968, Sewid formally adopted the family and Lelooska had a new name, Gekkun, chief of chiefs, which was a rare honor.

Abbott visited Lelooska in Ariel, Washington State. The visit was a success; everyone was impressed with Lelooska the carver, and Lelooska the man. They felt strongly that a man who started carving knowing nothing about Northwest Coast art and was now making a very comfortable living working full time at carving authentic traditional style coastal art would make an excellent role model. Abbott wrote: “We inquired in a tentative way whether he would be willing to contribute his effort to our project as an instructor, and he reacted quite enthusiastically” ([RBCM] Abbott to Turner, February 9, 1968). But negotiations continued for more than a year and a half, with neither Lelooska nor 'Ksan able to fit the other into their schedules. Unfortunately, Lelooska’s health began to fail, and eventually, he withdrew from the agreement. While not as much of a shock as Reid’s change of heart, it was, nonetheless, another disappointment.

As noted, Bill Holm started the first of several instructional visits on January 20, 1968, and was an instant success. Abbott moved quickly to try to get Holm to commit to more instruction. Holm agreed to come as often as he could, but was often committed to other projects (Bill Holm interview, May 16, 2002). Freda Diesing¹⁹³ stated that it was because of Holm that she really got excited about carving: “Before ever going to 'Ksan, I bought his book and read it about five times.

¹⁹³ Freda Diesing (1925-2003) first came to 'Ksan to work on projects ancillary to 'Ksan’s main goals. Perhaps most important was her work on recording the personal stories of elder Gitksan women, and to record the Gitksan language. During my interview with her, she brought up and was adamant that she was never a student at the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art, contrary to the numerous accounts in the literature. However, she did sit in on classes when her workload permitted, and would always attend Bill Holm’s classes. Diesing would go on to be an exceptional three-dimensional carver in the Haida style, a gifted designer of two-dimensional button blankets, and she made and sold silkscreen prints and created jewelry. She was an important teacher, influencing artists such as Don Yoemans, Gerry Marks, and Norman Tait.

The book helped me correct my designs. He was so passionate about the art. You could tell he believed it, and I believed him. It really was exciting. I never missed an opportunity to hear him” (Freda Diesing interview, May 17, 2002). Bill Holm’s contributions to ‘Ksan went far beyond occasional teaching: he advised on many issues and he developed the design for the “Indian Hand of History” (**figure 22**), which was used on bronze plaques to identify heritage locations throughout the entire area. The design was and still is used as the sign of authenticity for objects made by Native people. He also designed the stylized word “Ksan” for their logo, and designed the first brochure (**figure 23**), which included original concept art work. As late as 1973, Holm arranged a Seattle tour for the ‘Ksan dance group with their very popular production of *Breath of Our Grandfathers*, which was first performed in Ottawa to extremely high praise (Bergin, J., *Ottawa Citizen*, November 3, 1972; and *Ottawa Journal*, November 2, 1972). Holm’s book *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* was selected as one of most important books in *Great Canadian Books of the Century* (Vancouver Public Library 1999: 145).

Because Abbott could not find any instructors to fill in for Reid, and when their hopes that Davidson could come on weekends did not materialize, they commissioned Tony Hunt as a teacher of making carving tools. Sargent was critical of Hunt's performance as a teacher, stating to Holm in a letter, “[F]rankly we got more out of your two days than out of Hunt’s two weeks, I look forward to your return” ([RBCM] Sargent to Holm, March 22, 1968), and later “Tony is not trained to cope with a class of any size” ([RBCM] Sargent to Holm, March 28, 1968). However, while Sargent was frank with Abbott or Holm about Hunt’s contributions, she was

very careful in the wording of letters to Turner. She writes, “Great response to Tony’s carving classes and tool making classes” ([RBCM] Sargent to Turner, March 30, 1968). In fact, there was not any carving instruction, and the tool making class was unsatisfactory to at least some of the students: Freda Diesing, for example, stated, “The first tools I made with Tony Hunt were too brittle” (Freda Diesing interview, May 17, 2002).

Again, due the scarcity of qualified instructors, long periods of time passed when no instruction was available. There were no “long term” students. The first students were mostly older men from local Gitksan villages working in areas such as logging, fishing, and odd jobs. Between the end of February 1968 and the middle of June 1968, there were only eight days of instruction, and these were by Bill Holm. As Sargent wrote to Abbot, “Bill Holm is the real gold of this course, that rare combination of artist and teacher, both first class. No one we can bring can equal him for my money” ([RBCM] Sargent to Abbott, April 22, 1968).

Of course, the lack of instruction did not stop the committee’s desire to accomplish *something* (emphasis added). It had been at least 18 years since the seeds for a museum began to germinate in the Hazelton Library Committee and six years since the Skeena Treasure House opened in 1958, and motivation had increased. While the discussion in this paper mainly focuses on the wood carving arts training, the collective correspondence reveals that Abbott, Sargent, et al. contended at the same time with many other training dilemma’s and setbacks: for example; getting the approval and cooperation of the local Gitksan communities. Although the opposition that had surfaced during the planning stage of the Skeena

Treasure House had mostly been addressed, 'Ksan was a new project requiring new approvals. The committee spent a great deal of time on the subject of leather craft making, the hunt for basket making instructors, and, most importantly, the search for artists beyond carvers, especially for a traditional dance instructor. This study also does not discuss the myriad of problems encountered in the construction of the village, which included disagreement among elders from other communities over the erection of traditional buildings; electrician contract problems; campground construction; agreements for use of the land belonging to two Native bands; and the training of workers and new managers. This was a very complex project, and the vision and the planning that pushed the agenda were unrealistic. For example, in the beginning the committee made plans to go to every Native enterprise in North America seeking business models that 'Ksan might apply to their project. 'Ksan was the largest project of its kind, and creating a project this complex in a 'vacuum' was very challenging.

The undated briefs (likely from 1964/65) mentioned earlier in this chapter contain the earliest committee meeting minutes I was able to collect. One very interesting portion from the 1965 minutes reveals that the early scope of the project included the belief that the "ancient Indian village (later to be called 'Ksan) would be an ideal distribution center for superior Native handicrafts, carefully selected, from all over the province" (P. Sargent, circa.1965). Again, this is another example of Sargent wanting to include all manner of ancillary projects. While many of her ideas would have contributed greatly to 'Ksan, there was never enough time or money to do them.

The committee lacked pragmatic thinking and exhibited naiveté. The budget was unforgiving, and, with the exception of the trip to the Alaska venues, it did not contain the funds to follow through with the early travel plans.¹⁹⁴ Heinmiller's "Alaska Indian Arts, Inc." was a program more closely approximating the goals of 'Ksan. I visited Heinmiller's program (now run by son Lee Heinmiller) and could not see any major differences in Heinmiller's product line than 'Ksan's. Seeing the Heinmiller operation gave Polly the confidence to continue on the same course, but it did not change 'Ksan's direction.

The final travel plan to seek out markets other than 'Ksan for the products reveals conflicting goals. There are many examples of Sargent expressing anxiety over having enough quality carvings, women's handicrafts, etc. to satisfy the tourist demand for the collective arts. Despite Douglas Cranmer's lament that it was the junk craft work that paid the bills, Sargent continued to believe that the great art was the main ingredient for 'Ksan's success. In her view, the village would attract the tourists, but it was the art, not souvenir tee shirts, that would sustain it financially. In light of the stated goals, the time-consuming and unsuccessful search for other craft markets appears to have been counterproductive. It was also extremely optimistic to look for markets, at "home" and away, when on May 10, 1968, according to a memo to Indian Affairs ([RBCM] Memorandum to Jack Cooper, Indian Affairs from Don Abbott), they were having great difficulty finding instructors of any media: they had had a total of just 16 days' instruction and not a

¹⁹⁴ While I was able to find many references on a broad range of subjects, it is obvious that there are many gaps in correspondence.

single carving made (Bill Holm interview, May 16, 2002).

In the minutes of the 'Ksan Advisory Committee for April 25, 1968, Abbott announced that Robert Davidson would be coming to 'Ksan in early June. At that point while they had a verbal agreement with Davidson, they still did not have a signed contract. With the string of broken verbal agreements in the past, Abbott was nervous (Robert Davidson interview, May 18, 2002). However, on June 11, 1968, Abbott reports to the 'Ksan Advisory Committee that Davidson was in Hazelton "assisting with the training project and aiding with the details of the 'Ksan village" (Ibid.). This statement was a generous view of the facts, for Davidson arrived in the summer season to find there were no students to teach. Freda Diesing states, "At this point, he was a hired artist, he went there to make things for the houses [the houses that make up the 'Ksan village] when they were first built, but when the men got back from fishing, he did teach" (Personal communication, May 17, 2002).

Davidson was the first instructor to spend any time in 'Ksan—from June 1968 to December 1968. He was critical of the 'Ksan experience for several reasons:

While the main goal of 'Ksan was employment. I wanted to bring the art back, but most of the people there were not serious. Polly [Sargent] was always talking about Alaska's School [Heinmiller], but she did not know what to do, and never gave enough direction of what I should do. I felt frustrated and very depressed. There were no results coming out. I really did not know anything when I got there. I was only 21 years old, and while I carved a lot of argillite, I had only carved one piece of wood and I did not know anything about the Tsimshian style. The summer was slow and I would spend hours studying the poles around the area, and I learned a lot. I also got a commission to carve a frog,¹⁹⁵ and spent hours at Kitwancool studying frogs. (Robert Davidson interview, May 18, 2002)

¹⁹⁵ Davidson would go on to make the frog the subject of many works of art.

When asked about 'Ksan's later influence, he replied,

Polly, who was the boss, was always pushing innovation, and the carvers responded by doing innovation for the sake of innovation. Then there is the problem of the students becoming the teachers, just recycling their ideas that did not work. There are no quality standards; they just do not scrutinize their work. They would sell something, and make ten more just like it. They thought they were "masters," but they were not willing to do their homework. They never challenged themselves, I wanted to get people motivated, but I did not know what I was doing." (Ibid.)

While Davidson describes many problems, he also stated that 'Ksan was good for his career, he learned a great deal about the art of teaching, and, more importantly, he learned to respect the art of other Native cultures. Surprisingly, during the interview Davidson stated, "I would consider going back to 'Ksan to teach if they really wanted me, but we would have to back to the drawing board, and let humility be the teacher. They [the students] would have to go to the museums and study the great art, to experience the presence of fine art" (Ibid.).

In 1969, during another four-month lapse in carving instruction, Sargent and Abbott fruitlessly searched for a Native person to carve bentwood boxes. They finally approached Holm, who had made many boxes and had taught bentwood box construction. Holm, in heavy demand because of his knowledge of Northwest Coast art and his skill as an artist in the style of almost any Northwest Coast cultural object, did not have the two weeks required, but he recommended one of his students, Duane Pasco, a talented non-Native who carved in the Northwest Coast tradition. "He is extremely well qualified to help in painting and designing, as well as in box making. His carving is rapidly improving, but at the moment I would not recommend him as the best source for 3D instruction. This evaluation could change

rapidly” ([RBCM] Holm to Sargent, February 25, 1969). Pasco would later prove the assessment to be fact.

Pasco went to ‘Ksan in the middle of May 1969¹⁹⁶ for ten days to teach bentwood box construction, but “they were not set up for the school, and there were no students” (Duane Pasco interview, May 15, 2002). He was contracted to make three boxes, which, with the help of a couple of unofficial “students,” he finished in two days. To fill out the time he made a small mask and bowl. He gave them to Sargent who was surprised he could do anything so quickly and with such quality. He was then asked to design a painting for a house front for the first complete building. He also did that within a couple of days. Sargent was so impressed that she asked if he would be interested in working “full time” on a year-by-year contract. He was definitely interested. In June Sargent asked for approval from Abbott and Joseph Awmack from ARDA to present Pasco with a one-year contract to start in October 1, 1969. With a class of just six students, Pasco’s first semester as full time instructor dated from October to late November or early December, and like Davidson’s experience, it did not go well. Students came and went as they pleased, never really showing any sustained interest.

It should be noted that not only was the tuition paid for, the students themselves were paid \$90.00 a month to go to school. Because Hazelton was classified as an economically depressed area, the students received funding through

¹⁹⁶ There are two dates most often used to describe start of the ‘Ksan School: January 20, 1968, when the first class in the training program was held (by Bill Holm) and August 12, 1970, when the ‘Ksan village was officially opened. Actually the carving building was built a few months later with the funds (\$20,000) given by Premier W. A. Bennett at the opening. For the purpose of this study, I have chosen the date of January 20, 1968.

the Department of Agriculture and ARDA. I suspect that for the early students, going to “school” was more like regular job—and one with no oversight—than an opportunity to learn art. This frustrated Pasco greatly. In December, with a larger number of official students and several interested older men of Pasco’s age auditing the class,¹⁹⁷ Pasco was determined to set a different tone for the new class. He states that he was very strict, “almost militaristic in a way,” and it worked; people became more motivated, even if they did not like the loss of freedom (Duane Pasco interview, May 15, 2002). However, students like Ken Mowatt, who were very interested in learning as much as they could, criticized Pasco for being too strict. Mowatt stated, “driving someone to do something is not motivation” (Ken Mowatt interview, July 23, 2002).

Pasco, like Davidson, did not know the Tsimshian style. There was not anyone who really knew traditional formline design except Bill Holm.¹⁹⁸ Pasco was very candid about his shortcomings:

I had not really developed my own style at the time. I tried to learn things, and I was easily influenced. In fact, I was influenced by my students. I took some elements from their designs. I should not have because after six months of being there, my designs became worse. It took a few years to go back to a style that was not influenced by ‘Ksan. I had to put everything I learned in the trash, and reeducated myself. I had to go back and study the old pieces in museums and started from scratch. It was a sad thing (Duane Pasco interview, May 15, 2002).

Sargent’s pressure on the students to make innovative artwork grew. Pasco recalled, “Polly wanted them to learn tradition, but at the same time, she encouraged

¹⁹⁷ One of the rules set by Sargent was that only official students could not sell their work in the ‘Ksan village gift shop. That policy is no longer in effect.

¹⁹⁸ Because of Holm’s own ethical code, he would not sell his work.

them to do crazy things, be more modern, use strange materials and so forth.

She used to say ‘I can sell anything.’ She used to say that all the time” (Ibid.). The student who took “innovation” the furthest was Vernon Stephens:

When I was teaching at ‘Ksan Vernon was in high school. Vernon did not want listen to the teachers . . . the art teacher at school told him that he was a genius, and he believed it. Then some (American) hippie (Ron Burleigh) running from the draft came to Hazelton. He knew how to do silkscreen and Polly hired him to teach it. This guy ran down any kind of structure, authority, society, art, anything! He told Vernon, “You do not have to learn the traditional stuff, be an artist.” So, Vernon would not study the old works . . . When I left, Vernon became the formline teacher. I think I influenced him in terms of the forms and rules a little bit, but unfortunately, he also influenced me. By the time I was there six months, we were doing a ‘kind’ of formline, straight edge, angular, hard corners, etc. That is the ‘Ksan style . . . No one critiqued us. Who was there? Even Bill Reid, the great artist he was, did not really understand the formline system. (Ibid.)

The term, “Ksan style” was first mentioned in Hilary Stewart’s *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast* (1979). She describes:

A strong (‘Ksan) school of art, stylistic as well as actual, has emerged among the Tsimshian, Gitksan and Nishga people (collectively called the Tsimshian by anthropologists), and it seems appropriate here to look at the ‘*Ksan style* (emphasis added) rather than try to define “Tsimshian” art... Guided by instructors with a strong personal style, the artists have, since the late 1960s, developed look to their diverse designs which is distinctly ‘Ksan... The elements of the art are traditional, but segments of U forms and split U forms are elongated or abbreviated to provide the artist with additional shapes to serve his requirements. A distinguishing characteristic among some of the ‘Ksan artists is the use of these linear elements detached, or nearly so, from the main body design. The appearance of vigorous movement is often enhanced by such lines, which give a feeling of vibrancy (Stewart 1979:100).

When examining the side view of the Vernon Stephens’ chest (**figure 24**), the entire space is filled with profiles of various animals. These animals are almost squeezed into the limited space. Macnair describes, “Four separate creatures are represented

in each quadrant; starting in the upper left corner and moving clockwise they are bear, eagle, beaver, and wolf... The entire panel appears ready to rotate in a counterclockwise motion” (Macnair, Hoover and Neary 1980:95). Due to this composition the arrangement of the formline design appears to be very busy, and all lines have tremendous movement, which is a completely different design from a ‘traditional’ bentwood box or bent-corner design (**figure 25**). The ‘standard’ box design is painted or carved (or both), the main figure with the eyes, nose and mouth and its body often occupies in the entire end of the box along with smaller side designs. Viewers clearly see differences of the style of the boxes.

This so-called ‘Ksan style has been criticized by art historians, anthropologists and curators; Ostrowitz, for example, explains the ‘Ksan style as “... so-called failure is conceptualized in relation to the influential narrative of artistic *legitimacy* of the period on the Northwest Coast” (emphasis added) (Ostrowitz 2009:118). However, it is important to remember that the legitimacy of Northwest Coast art has been evaluated as a ‘static’ art form of the past, as belonging to a “traditional,” or “classic” period. Bill Holm made an interesting point about tradition and innovation of the Northwest Coast art. He states, “Most artists working today are true to what they *perceive* their tradition to be, ... But they’re *moving* – they’re not bound to one way to working (emphasis added). (Robert) Davidson, who works in a very traditional way, is doing some very creative new things. Nothing he does is anything like a copy of what came before, yet it is still shaped in the traditional framework” (Baker 1990:14). Holm continues to say, “What’s happening today is just an extension of what’s gone in the past. If the interruptions of the last two

centuries hadn't occurred, the art would have evolved differently than it has today" (Ibid.). I think 'hybridity' of the 'Ksan style is the evolution of a byproduct of the colonial encounter through their history, politics and time in Gitksan artistic life. I believe 'Ksan style should be accepted as such.

Another example is the 'Ksan narrative or mythological prints, which I named 'story print.' In 1977 Book Builders of 'Ksan produced *We-Gyet Wanders On: Legends of the Northwest Coast*. One of the prints, "We-gyet and the Swans" by Ken Mowatt, expresses tremendous movement and energy through this image (**figure 26**). The story says, "The startled swans rose in a body carrying the helpless We-gyet with them high into the air and away" (Book Builders of 'Ksan 1977: 42); this kind of tension and moment of the story is captured through the formline design elements. Mowatt states:

When I am working with lines, it is not a line; there is intensity, a feeling. It may be on a flat surface, but when you draw a line, you feel the form and of course the artistry that at that time, you are just learning to do work. So you could not be up here somewhere where you have, you become sensitive to line form and that sort of, where a single line, you can ... but you can not until they internalize anything by their own experience and feeling, ... It is from their own internal self where they have to internalize and say I'm feeling this, just by drawing a line" (Interview Ken Mowatt, July 23, 2002).

Mowatt further states, "it always relates somehow to legends or things that my grandmother talked about, and I have, if I can remember little bits and pieces of it, I will try to connect it somehow, because that is what the art is all about. It was not just these shapes put together to form a design of some sort, there is more meaning to it" (Ibid.). While Ken Mowatt is an example, some of 'Ksan artists use formline design elements to tell a story, legend or mythology. Even if the design elements are

not following canonical principle of formline system, this is another example of hybridity nature of their work as their evolutionary process. Mowatt stressed that the 'story' is important, part of his personal artistic expression and choice of the artist like any other artists in the world.

The new 'Ksan style was just what Polly wanted. Although she did not know the formline system, this new, different, style became popular, and that was her goal for 'Ksan. Her dream was to construct the village and, with trained artists working for the village, to make beautiful things. Pasco states, "Heinmiller's school was Polly's inspiration. She went to Alaska to see the Heinmiller facility. They were both dynamic individuals with dreams, and he impressed her" (Ibid.).

Sargent was also very impressed with Pasco's progress with the students. Because of his leadership, "they were willing to work very long hours, never less than 12 hours a day, and many days from 10:00 am to 2:00 am the next morning" (Ibid.). She wrote to Abbott, "Duane's classes are a greater success than even I expected, he is a wonder" ([RBCM] Sargent to Abbott, November 8, 1969). Later she would add, "Duane's still the best thing that has happened to us, a down-to-earth artist. Thought we'd never meet one. Everyone's work standard is climbing noticeably week after week" ([RBCM] Sargent to Abbott, November 25, 1969). Sargent was so pleased that she was talking to Pasco about a permanent position, starting with another one-year contract, which Pasco agreed to.

As time passed, however, Pasco became disenchanted with Sargent and her methods. For example, George MacDonald from the Canadian Museum of Civilization gave a grant to make reproductions of two poles at Kispiox:¹⁹⁹ After we got permission to do the poles from the house owners, I went to Polly to get a commitment to pay the two student assistants I needed every Friday. She did not pay the carvers and Polly and I had a big fight. She eventually paid them, but these kinds of things happened all the time, she would make a promise and then would not keep it. (Duane Pasco interview, May 15, 2002)

After two months into his second year, he resigned. When asked if he followed any of his students' careers, he replied,

Their work all looks the same. The 'Ksan project became very well known because it was publicized very well. The dance group, trained by the Tlingit carver and dancer, Nathan Jackson, was very good. They went to Japan, Germany and France and took their art with them. They got a big name and worldwide recognition, which was great on one hand, but on the other hand, it was the worst thing that could have happened to them because they were still children as far as learning the art form. They did not grow. There is a quote from a Chinese painting at the Seattle Art Museum, 'How can we create great art while we are celebrating ourselves.' They got the fame before it was deserved... You should never buy into your legend (Ibid.).

The 'Ksan village opened to great excitement in August 12, 1970. While 'Ksan would enjoy honor and adulation for a period of years, this marked the beginning of the end. If I were to analyze the Kitanmax School using a "bell curve," I would say it was at this point at the apex, starting its downward slope.

Chapter four thus summarized the many challenges facing this new educational venue such as locating funding; developing a new educational philosophy and a unique culture to stand the test of time; and reviving a tradition

¹⁹⁹ Pasco was to supervise the making of reproductions at 'Ksan and was working for and with the Skeena River Totem Pole Restoration Society, which had been chaired by Sargent since the early Skeena Treasure House days.

when the expertise, sense of history, and vision has been lost. We have seen that the period of 1965 to 1970, the formative years of the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art, was a combination of audacity, naiveté, and determination.

Sargent is credited with the development of 'Ksan the village and the Kitanmax School, and rightly so, but others, especially Don Abbott of the Royal British Columbia Museum, have received very little of the credit. My analysis reveals that his talents can be seen in every phase of 'Ksan. However, even with his leadership, the biggest challenges were money and finding qualified faculty. Finding and retaining the right kind of faculty would prove to be a problem for the school from its inception in 1965 until the school's closure in 2010. The second element needed for success was its students. We will see in chapter five that some of the early students were the reason behind not only 'Ksan's incredible professional business success but a new respect for all Northwest Coast Indian Art—which, in an unintended but amazing accomplishment, was finally being recognized as fine art.

CHAPTER 5: THE KITANMAX SCHOOL OF NORTHWEST COAST INDIAN ART: ITS RISE AND FALL AS A LEADER IN THE CULTURAL REVIVAL OF NORTHWEST COAST ART

In chapter four we saw some of the problems with the development of ‘Ksan as a tourist destination, in particular, the early years of the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art in the procurement of Gitksan master carvers.²⁰⁰ Chapter five will trace the history of the Kitanmax School from January 1968 when ‘Ksan first held classes, to its official opening on August 12, 1970, to the present. In spite of several ongoing administrative problems—especially fiscal difficulties and the lack of a carving shed²⁰¹—students of the Kitanmax School in the early years experienced dramatic success. The school was never able to establish a stable faculty, beyond employing former students. However, if we view the commercial success in the context of Polly Sargent’s stated goals for ‘Ksan, then the mix of instructors from different Northwest Coast tribes and non-Natives, as I found in my research, was never the problem many thought it to be. With regard to the issue of carving non-descriptive Northwest Coast style objects, what is clear is that the Gitksan artistic style and all the tribal styles of the Northern Northwest Coast were lost until Bill Holm published his *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* (1965).

This final chapter will look critically at the early causes for success beyond those listed above. In January 1968—what I refer to as ‘Ksan’s “unofficial”

²⁰⁰ “Master carvers,” are those artists who, because of their expertise, are capable of teaching.

²⁰¹ A “carving shed” is usually a large open space with a roof for carving totem poles.

opening—and in spite of the fact that there was no dedicated space for the school, classes began and were sporadically held over the next two years. In the early summer of 1970, in the school's the first documented evidence of success, the *Skeena Valley Advertiser* ran a full front page story on the "'Ksan Indian Craft Village and Museum," stating that the "museum is now open seven days a week, ten hours a day and is doing a land office business, so much so that the 'Ksan carvers cannot keep up with the demand for authentic Indian art work such as masks, food dishes, totem poles and the like" (July 17, 1970).²⁰² On August 12, 1970, 'Ksan officially opened to great fanfare.

Attending opening ceremonies were the Premier of the Province of British Columbia, the Honorable W. A. C. Bennett, and members of his Cabinet. Sargent, the Gitksan, and the Hazelton non-Native community raised \$38,000 as their part of a matching grant, and Bennett, on behalf of the provincial government, came to present the 'Ksan association with \$20,000, the government's final installment of the matching grant. 'Ksan had been receiving grants from ARDA, the Agriculture and Rural Act since 1967, but needed a great deal more financial help on a regular basis. The Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE)²⁰³ took on the responsibility of the final start-up finances of approximately \$252,000. Importantly, "the DREE Funds included the establishment of an up-to-date trade center where local artisans could be trained in the production of Indian art... By it's contribution

²⁰² I was privileged to have complete access to all 'Ksan records, including copying of any material I wanted. If there were records pertaining to sales in the very early years, they are lost. The records are stored at the village, and in at least two private residences.

²⁰³ DREE has gone through several changes; currently parts of DREE (and other programs) have been amalgamated with the Department of Industry, Science and Technology (IST) ([RBCM] Current Regional Development in Canada memo, 88-13E).

to the 'Ksan project," Kirk asserts, "it helped a proud people to foster their ancient culture, and *furthered the cause of inter-racial understanding between Canadians*" (emphasis added) (Kirk, vol. 2, no. 2, February 1971). This goal to improve race relations is not stated in any other documents from the period, and in my ten years of research in the area, including interviews, I came across no major race-related problems

At the opening, the various clan chiefs of the Gitksan and other Gitksan members participating in the project—the Fireweed, Frog, and Wolf—dressed in traditional regalia, and to commemorate the event, the 'Ksan dancers danced on stage (**figure 27**). Bennett is reported to have thoroughly enjoyed himself; he joined the 'Ksan dancers in their celebration "with a kick of his heels ... and with a dance all his own," prompting one of his cabinet colleagues to comment, "it looked like a turkey two-step" ("Bennett stands tall totem," *The Province*, August 19, 1970). It is also clear that Bennett was a strong supporter of the 'Ksan project; without Bennett, 'Ksan would not have gotten any further than Barbeau's Temlaham Park. He was quoted as saying "the event marked one of the "happiest days in his life" (*The Terrace Herald*, August 19, 1970). Leslie Dawn makes a point that the \$20,000²⁰⁴ "was a gift ... [and] may account for Bennett's name being associated with the pole" (Dawn 1981:159, ft.4). To state that Bennett gave the Gitksan a "gift" of \$20,000 or that the Gitksan carved the figure as a pay-off for the funding is an insult to both Bennett and the Gitksan. The money was part of the provisions of the provincial government grant described above.

²⁰⁴ The grant for the \$20,000 was for the construction of a carving 'shed' for the Kitanmax students, which opened in December 1970.

I believe the negative tone Dawn adopts throughout his thesis gives the wrong impression in many areas, in particular with regard to the cooperation of the different levels of government with the Gitksan. Without the willing cooperation of local governments and the many provincial governmental departments that worked tirelessly (e.g., the University of British Columbia and the RBCM, which provided much needed leadership), the project would not have reached fruition. The University of Victoria and the Canadian Museum of Civilization, among others, purchased masks, other carved works, and many silkscreen prints, also contributing to 'Ksan's survival. It is important to recognize that its various roles as patron, the government acted, in my opinion, for the purest of reasons. I contend that the 'Ksan village, the carving program, and the 'Ksan dancers could not have survived without continued support, and while the carving school is now closed, 'Ksan village and the 'Ksan dancers continue to receive grants, a testament to the enduring contributions of all who worked on, or gave support to, the concept of 'Ksan.

By the August opening date, the Gitksan student carvers had by this point carved several large totem poles. However, the one pole that encapsulated the “feeling” of everyone at the opening of 'Ksan—not just the carvers, but also all who were involved in the project—was a statement of appreciation, recognition and celebration. This pole of clan figures was topped by a large non-Native figure with a black top hat (**figure 28**) (see Appendix E). While this figure was carved in recognition of the contributions of all non-Natives and government officials who participated in the development of 'Ksan, this pole was especially for premier Bennett, and was soon dubbed by many as “Bennett's pole”—causing an eruption of

controversy. Bill Wilson, administrator of the Union of British Columbia Chiefs and former University of Victoria student, stated that the 'Bennett pole' was a "sacrilege . . . a terribly unfunny joke, [and] where I come from [Cape Mudge] we would have buried the carver[s] with the pole. We tried to talk to the people there about the totem pole, but 'Ksan village is a project mainly run by non-Indians²⁰⁵ who are prostituting Indian art . . . [it's terrible] that the Indian culture . . . could be exploited to this degree." Wilson went on to say that "the presence of Bennett among such Indian religious figures as killer whale, bear and frog was unforgivable" ("Mythology Lessons Offered by Indians" in *Victoria Daily Columnist* August 21, 1970).

In her speech at the opening, Lynn Christian, President of the 'Ksan Association acknowledged the efforts of Sargent in bringing the concept of 'Ksan to fruition, stating that that she had for many years "spoken on behalf of the Indian people. We [the Indian People] thought it appropriate to present her a Chief's Talking-stick. This, in effect, gives her the authority to speak for the (Gitksan) Indian people" ("Ancient Celebrations Observed at Official Opening of 'Ksan village" in *The Smithers Interior News*, page 1, August 19, 1970). This honor reveals the Gitksan's ultimate trust in Sargent (**figure 29**).

Sargent's first official act as an official speaker for the Gitksan was to travel to Victoria to "clear up the misconceptions generated by Wilson . . . (stating) that 'Ksan would never have had the pole if the Indians had not consented to it. Neither could have Bennett taken part in the traditional ceremonies if the Indians did not approve

²⁰⁵ This statement is untrue: although Sargent certainly supervised the 'Ksan project, it was a collaborative project between the Native and non-Native residence of Hazelton and various levels of government.

of it" ("Hazelton Indians Defend Bennett totem" in *Victoria Daily Colonist* August 26, 1970). Indeed, awarding Sargent the high honor of the talking-stick was a very public statement that she and the Gitksan were working together. The fact that the pole was carved as a class project, produced solely by 'Ksan student carvers of the Gitksan artists, points to the fact that there was no coercion. All students interviewed knew that without governmental help, there would not be a school.

Media support for the opening was extremely positive, as evidenced in the many newspaper accounts. Lynn Whitehouse in *The Daily News*, for example, not only raved that "the intense pride of 'Ksan's accomplishment was so strong you could smell it in the air," but she also took Wilson to task, citing his response as "sour grapes" and "completely out of place," she continued, "If this project was initiated by White, Indian, or an African, its completion was initiated only through the united efforts of everyone who believes in the resurrection and preservation of the coastal Indian culture" ("My Diary," *The Daily News*, page 4, August 19, 1970). The event was not just covered by local print media: Barry Willis of Canada's CBC television, traveling with Premier Bennett, also covered the official opening (Ibid.). And Sargent received further acclaim in the *Victoria Daily Times* when Arthur Mayse, one of the paper's major editors, wrote in his discussion of the totem pole issue:

But I suggest the honor bestowed on totem-topper Bennett might better have gone to Mrs. Polly Sargent. If it hadn't been for Mrs. Sargent of Hazelton, the Indian past might never have been reconstructed . . . with Indian help, but otherwise almost single-handed Polly Sargent stocked and maintained a museum [the Skeena Treasure House] not far from the 38 acre culture center

tract. It was from her collection,²⁰⁶ and with her urging, that the dream of a culture centre took wing. (Arthur Mayser...*The Victoria Daily Times* August 19, 1970).

At the time of the official opening of 'Ksan, it consisted of four new houses and the former Skeena Treasure House, which had been moved to the village site from its original Skeena River water front location in Hazelton. It is important to note that some of the early students, a few of them with their families, had also been working in the community as carpenters or electricians. Before 'Ksan was operational, these soon-to-be students working on the village were making good wages. Once the construction was completed, however, the carpenters and electricians became students and were paid a much lower wage as student carvers, just \$90.00 a month. The school's designation as a 'trade school' meant that the students received a wage that was supposed to meet their basic needs, but this wage did not actually do so ([RBCM] Abbott letter to J. Cooper, May 10, 1968; Duane Pasco interview May 15, 2002; Earl Muldon interview July 24, 2002). This reduction in funds would have consequence, as we will see below.

In the late 1960s there were very few job opportunities for Northwest Coast Native artists, and certainly none in Hazelton, which was at that time an unincorporated settlement with a population around 420 Natives and non-Natives. One of the stated reasons to create 'Ksan was to develop moneymaking opportunities for the Gitksan, who had lost their employment with the closure of local sawmills, the main industry in the area (see chapter four). As a concept, 'Ksan

²⁰⁶ While the Sargents contributed to the museum's collections, most of the collection came from the Gitksan community.

was supported by almost everyone in both the Gitksan and non-Native communities.²⁰⁷ But once the project moved beyond concept, it met major opposition from different Gitksan bands. An erroneous belief cropped up that some clans, but not all were going to make money off the project, and some people developed a mistrust of Sargent “because she was not an Indian” (Bill Blackwater, interview August 1st, 2003). According to Coleman, while this lack of trust was painful for Sargent, she never wavered in her determination to see ‘Ksan and the students a success, nor did she harbor any ill feelings toward her adversaries (Barbara Coleman interview July 26, 2003). This crisis was averted when Billy Blackwater, a politically powerful chief councilor with the Kispiox band, and another chief councilor who sided with Blackwater, signed the resolution to continue the project (Bill Blackwater, interview August 1st, 2003).

The next crises centered on the students refusing to work for wages, and becoming independent businessmen and women artists. From Bill Holm’s earliest instruction in January 1968, the students were encouraged to conduct independent research in all the areas of Northwest Coast art, especially the carving of masks, shaman rattles, other ceremonial objects, and totem poles. As the students matured as carvers, they began to carve many of these traditional items for the ‘Ksan dancers and for display purposes (Phyllis James, “Triumph of ‘Ksan,” *Daily Colonist Magazine*, Victoria, B.C., September 13, 1970). Of course, the student carvers were only paid as students, not as artists. Sargent in her correspondence reveals that she

²⁰⁷ Another problem was and a remains is the land on which the project is located. The Gitksan band owns the property, and has steadfastly refused to donate the land to the ‘Ksan project, or to allow use of the land rent-free. This has caused and continues to cause a financial hardship to ‘Ksan (Bill Blackwater interview August 1st, 2003; Laurel Mould interview July 20, 2002).

was conflicted on the issue of appropriate student wages. In a letter to David B. Turner, Deputy Ministry, Department of Recreation and Conservation, she justified her demands for higher prices for carvings: “Only at a high price does the superior craftsman receive just remuneration—and ‘just remuneration’ is our number one objective” ([RBCM] Sargent’s letter to Turner, June 12, 1967).²⁰⁸ But at the same time she did not see the student artists as artists, especially those making the “potlatch paraphernalia” that was to be used at ‘Ksan. She saw them rather as simple wage earners, as outlined in the early undated proposals for ‘Ksan village.

I believe that Sargent’s position was due in part to the fact that she knew most of the artists as teenagers, and simply could not see them as adult artists in the full sense of the word, and in part to the fact that often there was no cash available to make the pay role. Sargent did not share ‘Ksan’s monetary problems with the student workers (perhaps if she had, she would have received more understanding). While correspondence supports that Sargent embraced Barbeau’s plan to revive traditional arts in order to build a more satisfying life for the Indians ([CMC] Correspondence, Barbeau to Harkin, J.B., see chapter two), she also, like Barbeau, saw the emerging artists as craftsmen doing craftwork. However, the commercial success of the student/artists/businessmen and women would soon take on a life of its own.

Sargent worked closely with Don Abbott and ARDA to find the additional funding for the village needed to keep up with its development. For example, the

²⁰⁸ Unfortunately Sargent did not make copies of all her correspondence. This early letter to Turner is most interesting, and likely her comments are rhetorical, considering I have found no evidence that the students were selling their wares so early. I was also unable to find a response from Turner.

initial plans did not include a professional art school. Because of the impressive initial progress of 'Ksan and the fact that the funding was provided under the guise of 'Ksan being a trade school, ARDA justified a grant supplement to the agreement ([STHC] Old 'Ksan Rural Development grant extension, 1970):

Provision is being made to keep at Hazelton, for an additional year, an instructor (Duane Pasco) who has shown himself capable of working well with the people of the area and to be very competent in the art style and crafts of the Gitksan. Provision is also made for additional help, materials and classroom facilities required to fully develop the skills of a number of craftsmen who have shown remarkable talent as well as to provide for additional students to become craft producers. To date this training program has shown the existence of a number of native people exhibiting remarkable skill in carving and has produced excellent pieces of a quality acceptable to many museums in North America . . . The additional training requested will assure sufficient well-trained craftsmen to make possible sufficient sales to maintain the 'Ksan museum and craft shop on a sound economic basis (Ibid.).

Some of the early students did produce quality work that found its way into some of Canada's best museums, such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Royal Museum of British Columbia. It is clear that 'Ksan helped to engender the respect for Canadian First Nations artists and Native artists throughout North America. By the time of the official opening of 'Ksan in August 1970, as stated, the demand for student work was more than the students could accommodate. The question is: Why were the Kitanmax art students so successful so quickly?

One of the reasons for their success was the 'Ksan Performing Arts Dance Group, under her direction, brought more fame to 'Ksan at the time than did the artists. The Dance Group revealed the use of traditional masks, rattles, etc. and introduced Gitksan art and culture to North America, Europe, and Asia through the unique practice of selling the artifacts used in the performances immediately after

the shows. This created a sense of personal entrepreneurship other than sales through the gift shop.

As stated, neither Barbeau nor Sargent envisioned Northwest Coast arts being taught on such a large scale in their original plans, but Sargent expanded her plan almost immediately after she began her successful search for grants by introducing the element of Native dance into the equation. In keeping with my belief that she was influenced by Barbeau's 1924 petition and plan for the development of a National Park in the area of Hazelton (see chapters two and three), Barbeau addressed the subject of performing arts with his statement, "The Indian dances, with the traditional costumes and masks, might be also revived" ([CMC] Correspondence, Barbeau to Harkin, J.B., B202 F.22; see chapter 2). I believe that Sargent, influenced by Barbeau, knew that a dance group was essential for 'Ksan's success, and started looking for a model program to replicate. This turned out to be Heinmiller's dance group from Haines, Alaska.

At the same time that Sargent and the 'Ksan staff were initially putting their plans into action, a somewhat similar project in Haines, Alaska, had begun under the leadership of Carl Heinmiller. Sargent had heard of Heinmiller's award-winning dance group and she and two colleagues visited Heinmiller. While not impressed with the student-carving program, she was struck by the dances, and especially a dance of the Tlingit dancers, Nathan Jackson (Lee Heinmiller interview, May 25, 2002). Soon after their return to Hazelton, she made an offer to Jackson to teach traditional dance. While the two nations, the Tlingit and the Gitksan Tsimshian, had

their own style of dances, some were very similar. After somewhat difficult negotiations, Jackson was hired.²⁰⁹ The singers and dancers came into being in 1969.

Jackson knew his time at 'Ksan would be short, and it was his goal to involve the both age groups but especially the elders. He started teaching the children first, which went extremely well; however, building a relationship with the adults and the elders went slowly. There was never overt opposition to Jackson (Nathan Jackson interview, November 15, 2002). Jackson did eventually gain their respect, evident through the fact that the elders allowed him to record the old songs (Ibid.). Jackson taught just two dances, "The Escape of the Grouse" and "The Chief's Competitive Dance." It turned out that the Gitksan elders did remember some of the old dances, but after hiding them so long because of the potlatch law; they had lost their confidence and were afraid they would be seen as foolish (Billy Blackwater, interview, August 1, 2003). The fact that the elders began to share family owned dances and songs for the public performances was a strong endorsement of the 'Ksan project. By the time Jackson returned to Alaska, the young and the elders had gained confidence through working with Jackson. The 'Ksan singers and dancers officially organized in the spring of 1969. They began to dance for the tourists, and by the time of the 'Ksan opening they were very professional (Shirley Muldon, Fanny Smith and Diane McCare interview July 20, 2002).

²⁰⁹ As remarkable as Jackson was as a dancer, he is today considered by many to be the best traditional Tlingit carver. He attended the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and while there he completed his woodcut, "Kooshta" (Gritton 2000:120-22, back jacket cover), for which he received the Arizonian award (Nathan Jackson interview November 15, 2002).

As they improved, they began to get invitations to perform around the local area. In 1966 archaeologist George MacDonald, who worked at the Canadian Museum of Man (now the Canadian Museum of Civilization) was doing fieldwork on the Upper Skeena River. He was a strong supporter of 'Ksan, but was most interested in the 'Ksan singers and dancers, especially as a separate entity. By the early 1970s he began to devote much more time at 'Ksan, working with the Canadian National Film Board on a 'Ksan film project:

I particularly liked the performance of Chief Heisens of Gitsagukla, and now we had a good record of the 'Ksan dance group ... I was really impressed by how good a public performance they could do and how much it conveyed some of the deep core elements of Indian culture. When back in Ottawa, I talked to Bill Taylor who was the director of the museum, and he agreed that I could put time and resources into bringing them to Ottawa. I arranged with the National Arts Center to have a performance on the stage of the Art Center, and a big art exhibition also in the Art Center. (George MacDonald interview May 31, 2002)

The performance, *The Breath of Our Grandfathers*, depicted a Gitksan ceremonial potlatch to commemorate the death of a chief and the succession of a new chief **(figure 30)**. The first performance, on November 3, 1972, was a command performance for Governor-General Roland Michener. Two more performances were held on November 4, 1972.

The Ottawa production of the 'Ksan dancers marked the first time a British Columbia Native group ever performed in Ottawa. MacDonald described sitting in the first row with the Governor General:

I sat there with a big smile during the entire performance, trying to encourage the performers ... Afterwards at a big party for the cast and invited guests; I was given a Gitksan ceremonial name that belonged to the Chief of the Gitksan Kispiox, which in English was "the smiling face of the great grizzly bear."

It was a wonderful time (George MacDonald interview March 31, 2002).

Positive performance reviews ran in all the local papers, including articles by Alixe Carter in *The Ottawa Journal* (November 2, 1972, page 46); Jenny Bergin in the *Ottawa Citizen*, (November 3, 1972, page 30); Allison Appelbe in the *Ottawa Citizen* (November 3, 1972); Barrie Cook in the *Vancouver Province* (November 16, 1972); Olive Dickasin in *The Ottawa Journal* (November 4, 1972, page 23); and Gretchin Bozak in the *Indian News* (Ottawa, February issue 1973, pages 1, 6, 7). After the last performances, the carved artwork that had been used in the performance was literally *sold off* the dancers (emphasis added). It is my belief that it was because of these Ottawa performances that Northwest Coast art, specifically Gitksan, became part of the Canadian art lexicon.²¹⁰ As we have seen in chapter three, Barbeau's 1927 exhibition *Canadian West Coast Art—Native and Modern* was also important in this regard. But the 1970s event accompanied the larger revival, with the "feel" of a "real" renaissance. Furthermore, the 1973 event was had the appeal of a performance: the *Breath of Our Grandfathers* was a played on a real stage with an understandable story line, costumes, exotic dialogue, music, and dance.

Of special note was that the only northern contemporary art collected by National Museum up to this point had been the Inuit art collected by James Houston (Hall 1983:51-59). MacDonald stated:

²¹⁰ Interestingly, Leslie Dawn, the only other scholar to write extensively on 'Ksan, never mentions MacDonald as a major contributor to the success of 'Ksan and the artists. Instead he devotes just two sentences in his work describing this vitally important history as one set of "projects [that] were an extension of previous ARDA agreements." He contends also that the tour "opened a new phase in the development and recognition of the school" (Dawn 1981:182-3). Actually, the Ottawa 'tour' had nothing to do with ARDA, nor was the school mentioned in the many reviews of the performance. While some artists would regularly travel with the dancers as dancers themselves, the artists would never again replicate the success of the first Ottawa trip.

For some reason the museum did not think Indian art was their mandate, and that Northwest Coast creativity had not yet achieved the status of art. We had nothing Indian in the collection at all. After the last performance they (the students) sold pieces to the public right out of the show. But there was an awful lot left at the end, so I talked to Polly and various artists about selling the rest to the museum. I put that to Bill Taylor and we found some money and bought the remaining pieces of the collection. That became the beginning of the Indian collection at the National Museum. Now we have thousands of pieces (George MacDonald interview, March 31, 2002).

This performance in Ottawa thus brought together the dance group, 'Ksan, the village, and the 'Ksan artists in a symbolic group relationship. However, the fact that some of the artists now began to enjoy individual fame as artists was a harbinger of difficult things to come for the village. In an interview, MacDonald referred to the effects on 'Ksan:

Later on I began to think that is what started pulling 'Ksan apart, because as certain artists became better known and made more money, they started to question why am I paying 'Ksan a percentage of my sales, when I can do quite well without them ... they could deal with patrons coming to them without paying a fee to 'Ksan. This created a financial problem for 'Ksan because ['Ksan] had counted on the fees as a major source of income" (Ibid.).

During the 1970s, the dancers performed all over North America, Korea, and Australia, always to rave reviews, and in 1978. Neil Sterritt,²¹¹ who took over management of the three programs when Sargent's health began to deteriorate in the late 1970s, stated that while some at the school did get some commissions through direct marketing, such as a pole that was erected in Paris (*B. C.'s Northwest Today*, November 1979), "it was the dance performances, nationally and

²¹¹ Neil Sterritt, Gitksan name Madeegam G'yamk, was an artist, businessman, Gitksan historian, and author of *Tribal Boundaries in the Nass Watershed* (Sterritt et al. 1998). He was an expert witness in the *Delgamuukw* case, the research director in the 1970s, and president of the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en tribal council in the 1980s.

internationally, that ... was the best marketing tool you could have, no question”

(Neil Sterritt interview, July 25, 2002).

Another important reason for the success of 'Ksan and the Kitanmax student artists was the “the initiation of federal funding for artists to contribute to the formation of national culture and image” (Duffek 1993:221). Hall also states (1983:58):

The Canadian Centennial in 1967 witnessed an explosion of interest in Canada's heritage which was reflected in the tremendous growth of museums across the country. In response to this interest, the federal government established the National Museum Corporation with the component museums responsible in part to collect, document, preserve and exhibit objects, undertake research and sponsor traveling exhibitions of their collections (National Museums Act 1967-68:2).

Certainly early student success was due in large part to timing. The year was 1967, the Canadian centennial year, when Polly Sargent's hard work, persistence and vision possibly spurred on Barbeau's dream of Temlaham forty years earlier, became a reality. Canada's Native art and culture was now inclusive, 'things' Indian, especially art were coming in vogue with serendipity being a major player in 'Ksan's success.

In 1967 the exhibition, *Arts of Raven: Masterworks by the Northwest Coast Indian* at the Vancouver Art Gallery demonstrated such an artworld. Unlike the exhibition of *Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery in 1927, this exhibition was truly the first exhibition to bring about a perception shift of First Nations objects as art or fine art in Canada. The exhibition was curated by Vancouver Art Gallery acting director and art historian, Doris Shadbolt, in cooperation with First Nations art experts, anthropologist Wilson Duff, artist and art

historian Bill Holm, and Haida artist, Bill Reid. The purpose of the exhibition was clearly stated by Shadbolt (Duff, Holm and Reid 1967: n.p.):

The intent of this exhibition is to make an explicit and emphatic statement contributing to this (perceptual) shift: this is an exhibition of art, high art, not ethnology. It proposes to bring together many of the masterworks of this art, to show the wide range and aesthetic excellence of its forms, and to explicate and establish its claim to greatness.

As Shadbolt's statement indicates, the exhibition was mounted in accordance with Western artistic criteria, an art-for-art's sake display, with each object mounted in a visually isolated manner with no specific cultural information or meanings. As the Western myth, artist-as-genius method was applied to highlight individual artists such as Charles Edenshaw and Bill Reid, the exhibition related efforts such as the catalogue and a panel discussion, also emphasized a Western art history methodology, and a new vocabulary that included stylistic analyses, iconography, connoisseurship, quality, masterpiece, and master artists. The exhibition successfully constructed the value of First Nations art and artists, and it was validated and legitimized by the artworld, at the insistence by the museum professionals, scholars and artists that such material be seen as fine art.

The 'Ksan artists received a great deal of commissions from government agencies. For example; Ron Sebastian and Earl Muldon created the three panels of the mural at Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) in Ottawa (**figure 31**). These panels were commissioned by Public Works Canada for the building of Les Terrasse de la Chaudiere in 1978. The mural is composed of three panels; the centre panel represents the Carrier Beaver, Bear and Wolf crests and is two dimensional and non-directional. The left-hand panel represents the

Gitksan Fireweed crests including the Killer Whale, Grouse, Owl and Human Figure. Directed to the right, it leads to the central focal point. The right-hand panel represents the North West Coast Wolf Warrior and is directed to the left towards the centre panel. The entrance become a focal point of the mural because of the placement of creatures. The style of the mural is done in a 'Ksan style with straight edge, angular and hard corner to create various creatures as we have previously seen. They create a great deal of tension and energy.

Walter Harris also got a commission for the house post (**figure 32**). The design of this house post represents two of the Gitksan crests. The bottom figure is the Bear and the top is the Sea Bear. Both crests are from the Fireweed clan. Harris' totem pole carving style is very much close to a traditional Tsimshian style; for example, the arms and legs of Tsimshian totem pole figures are more lifelike in their roundness; they are usually depicted in a standing position with slightly bent knees (**see figure 10 & 11**).

In 1980 Walter Harris and Earl Muldon got another commission for House of Commons in Ottawa. Their works were done by limestone. It was announced, "Ottawa – A group of four Indian and five Inuit artists have been invited to develop designs for some unfinished areas in the Parliament Buildings...This project will further reflect the cultural diversity our Canadian heritage within the Centre Block" (Public Works Canada, February 4, 1980). Harris created "Killer Whale," attached by grouse and human figures were for Commonwealth Room in 1981 (**figure 33**). Muldon's "untitled" piece is located in the House of Commons entrance, was done in 1982-83. Five panel sculpture with traditional symmetrical front views depicting:

three family crests; the frog; the own; and the wolf) and the human element filling the entire panels. Two totem figures are located at each end (**figure 34**).

While these 'Ksan artists' pieces are decorated in various government buildings to demonstrate First Nations art as part of 'Canadian heritage,' two-dimensional graphic art was also highlighted during this time period; for example, Canadian Indian Marketing Service in Ottawa published *Northwest Coast Indian Artists Guild: 1977 Graphic Collection*. They state (Canadian Indian Marking Services 1977: n.p.):

A companion publication to a limited edition collection of 19 Northwest Coast silkscreened designs (75 sets of each design only, with seven artist's proofs and one printer's proof) ... Each print in this series bears the seal of the Northwest Coast Indian Artists Guild and comes with a letter signed by the artist, the printer and the publisher verifying that the production of this series has been carefully controlled in regard to the quality of the reproduction and the quantity of prints made.

This statement emphasizes the notion of "individual artists," which was demonstrated in the exhibition, *Arts of Raven* in 1967 as I previously described. One of the artists was 'Ksan artist, Roy Henry Vickers, and he presented a print entitled *My Guardian Angel* (**figure 35**). Vicker states, "My Guardian Angel is depicted with a war helmet and visor and an eagle breast plate. He carries the sword of truth to destroy the enemies who might wish to harm me" (Canadian Indian Marking Services 1977: no.18). Vicker's *Guardian Angel* figure is depicted in a dramatic manner as it looks like a great energy penetrating from his body. Comparing this figure with the design of the bent-corner box (**figure 25**), lines of the figure of the bent-corner box is consisted of tapering and swelling lines like smooth rhythm, but lines of Vicky's figures are consisted with various sizes and thickness of lines: some

extremely thin lines, some angular u- or s-various angular tapered lines, which creates a feeling of tension. This Canadian Indian Marking Services as Native prints distribution system continued in the following year, and they published *Northwest Coast Indian Artists Guild: 1978 Graphic Collection*.

Bill Ellis, a small publisher with a small retail bookstore specializing in Northwest Coast art and culture, in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands). His contribution to the success of 'Ksan cannot be overestimated. Without his belief in silkscreen prints, the term "Ksan style" would have gone unnoticed. Around 1962, Ellis began to add lithography portrait prints by Bill Reid to his line of published books. Ellen Neel (Kwakwaka'wakw) is thought to be the first person on the Northwest Coast to use the serigraph process, more commonly known as the silkscreen print process, in 1949, but her success was only moderate. Bill Reid on the other hand made a few prints using the lithography process, but the silkscreen was his preferred process (Hall, Blackman and Rickard 1981:49-50). Reid's prints were successful but his print runs were small, as was the production of most of his edition work including jewelry, which helped keep interest high. Today, *if* you can find Reid's work, the prices are very high.

Ellis approached 'Ksan in early 1978 about publishing a small catalogue of silk screen prints by the former students of the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art. Later that year Ellis published *Ksan: The First Annual Collection of 1978 Original Graphics (figure 36)* and he created a distribution system for prints of 'Ksan artists. Ellis states (1978:n.p.):

Seen as a whole, this collection makes a vigorous and encouraging statement about the future of Northwest Coast Indian art. Young artists, highly trained

in the traditional art forms and deeply immersed in the legends of their people, have successfully declared their individuality ... The basic style of the group is appropriately Tsimshian in its precision and refinement of line. There are also illustrative and emotional qualities in the prints which set them apart from all other prints currently being made on the Northwest Coast.

Ellis also created the 'Ksan art card series in order to sell, in a reasonable price, to his customers (**figure 37**). This distribution system was great advertisement to the public. One of the prints from this card series is *The Gitksan Dance of the Hummingbird Flight* by Vernon Stephens, 1975 (**figure 38**). The Gitksan dancer in the card is jumping in air, and the print captures the moment of the dancer's movement. All the movement and diagonal placement of the dancer, creates dynamic composition. This kind of print as I mentioned previously, is a "story print," inviting you to be part of the story of the print. The dancer's body is formed by various elongated sizes of u-forms; some look like hanging ribbons from the shirt, some are part of the dancer's body. This kind of hybrid style design is 'Ksan style.

In an interview, Ellis stated,

As you can tell by the title, I thought the artists would go on to greater things. Unfortunately, some of the collection did not sell too quickly. The work of the winners was obvious quickly, but the losers whose work didn't appeal quite the same way, I was reluctant to try for another catalogue. I researched the new field and found that prints can be divided into three groups; first there is a group that is most often of a single animal or a "spirit," which I have coined as "portrait prints," or crest portraits; secondly, there is group that the image is extremely complex, almost completely filling the space, I have coined this group as "busy prints,"²¹² and lastly, there is a group that is made

²¹² As stated I have refer to this group of prints as "story prints." They can be busy, even very busy, but they are mostly myth or legend. I suggest it is this group that is important to the continuation of Gitksan culture. Originally, myths and legends were the traditional stories told over and over by the elders centuries ago. As stated, the potlatch law was the chief cause of the lost of tradition. The story prints are the graphic telling of mythology and art form that helped non-Gitksan people understand the Gitksan people art and culture.

up of two or more of distinctive figures that always depicts a myth or legend. (Bill Ellis interview, November 11, 2002)

Several totem poles by 'Ksan artists can be found in America. The *Midtown Plaza Totem Pole* in Rochester, New York, for example, was commissioned by Kodak Inc. and carved by Chief Walter Harris and Art Sterritt (**figure 39**). This pole is unusual in its iconography, which contains both traditional Gitksan and contemporary commercial images that clearly identify some Kodak products, such as an eye which represents Kodak's first camera, and an image that pays tribute to xerography's role in Rochester's commerce. All the iconographical symbolism was carefully arranged by the artists. The description of the pole is presented below:

Freedom and Self Determination:

The eagle atop Midtown's pole symbolizes the process of self-determination as it has been achieved for the people of North America.

A Box Which Captured Light

Above the woman is a box decorated with an eye. According to Northwest Indian legend, the sun was stored in such a box until Raven stole it and took it to its place in the sky. For Rochesterians, the box represents a camera, the box in which George Eastman "recaptured" the sun and stored its light.

Flour and Flowers:

On the reverse side of the totem pole (**figure 40**), below the box, a fireweed (one of the few symbols of vegetation used in Northwest Indian art) painted in black represents both flour and flowers. Its image, duplicated in red, pays tribute to xerography's role in Rochester commerce.

The Contribution of Women:

Above the beaver sits the figure of a woman who represents the contribution of women to the two societies. For the Gitksan tribe she is a reminder of myths about the Bear Mother, and a symbol of matrilineal descent (status inherited through the mother rather than the father). For Rochesterians, she is a reminder of the leadership of Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman, and other outstanding women of our area.

Peace and the Iroquois Nation

Rochester's Indian Past is represented by an Iroquois symbol on the back of

the pole. After consultation with the local Indian community, the motif chose (Turtle with Tree of Peace Growing from its Back) was interpreted and painted by the totem pole carvers. Thus, Rochesterians can be reminded of the Iroquois Nation which inhabited our area.

Commerce:

At the bottom of the pole site is a beaver. For Indians and non-Indians, the beaver represents an industrious nature. This beaver, identified by his crosshatched tail and broad for Rochester Commerce.

Some of 'Ksan artists were getting a commission from abroad. For example, Earl Muldon and Phil Janze got a commission to create a totem pole in the Little World Museum of Man, Aichi, Japan in 1988 (**figure 41**). This museum is the first open-air museum in Japan for visitors to experience cultures of the world. The Tlingit big house in Alaska was created there too. Muldon and Janze's totem pole depict the beak of the raven holding a Copper, and the sun is placed between the ears of the raven. The mythological man is searching for his missing wife riding on the back of a killer whale. Three potlatch rings were placed on the top of the pole. The totem pole is stylistically different than traditional Tsimshian totem poles (see figure 11); each figure of a Tsimshian pole is usually distinctively separated from each other; it looks stylistically closer to Haida totem.

As we have seen 'Ksan artists after the opening of 'Ksan museum and school, they were very popular and a tremendous amount of demands from government institutions, museums, the commercial market place. Moreover, the early carvers, now independent artists, had to compete in an ever-growing art market. But the artists were never completely divorced from 'Ksan. Most of these commissions went to the Gitksan students who were in the earlier classes such as Earl Muldon, Water Harris, Victor Mowatt, and a very few later artists, such as Ron Sebastian.

Especially, Freda Diesing instructed at various venues in British Columbia and Alaska (Freda Diesing interview May 17, 2002). The Northwest Community College at Terrace, B.C., honored her by naming the School of Northwest Coast Art after her, “Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art.” Unfortunately, she was killed in an auto accident in 2003. She was arguably one of the most successful Northern Northwest Coast²¹³ woman artists.

Bill Holm taught his first class of the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art on January 20, 1968, and so by the time the Kitanmax School opened officially in 1970, the students had been learning for two years (see chapter four). They were skilled “enough” in the making of masks, rattles, and totem poles to consider their work as products for the tourist trade in Victoria and Vancouver, rather than as works for ceremonies such as the potlatch. Sargent succeeded in her goals for production: in addition to the student carvers, about 150 workers, mostly local Indians, were making bark baskets, moccasins, leather jackets, “trade” blankets, bead work, soap berries (to make Indian ice cream), and many other items. These, for the tourist trade and sold in the gift shop, amounted to several hundreds of thousands of dollars (Cook, *The Province*, October 2, 1970). However, according to interview accounts, “Polly’s idea of making money for ‘Ksan was practically starvation wages for the artist with ‘Ksan making the bulk of the profit. That strategy did not work long” (Earl Muldon interview, July 23, 2002).

²¹³ The northern Northwest Coast tribes include the Haida, Tlingit and the Tsimshian.

Perhaps the most important non-governmental player in spreading the word on the art of 'Ksan, and Northwest Coast art in general, through eastern Canada was Ottawa's Snow Goose Gallery. David Wright, owner of the Gallery stated,

In the late 1960s we were just getting into Northwest Coast work, but there wasn't very much really fine work available. I knew Doug Cranmer (Kwakwaka'wakw artist) and he said I should visit 'Ksan and see what's being done, that some young people were really doing some marvelous things. I first went to 'Ksan school around 1972 after the dance here in Ottawa, and later in the 1970s I went up quite a few times. I bought a lot of stuff in the early years and then it gradually died off because I think the artists wanted to go off on their own, and not go under the auspices of 'Ksan. When the dance group came to Ottawa, we hosted a lot of the dancers. It was a lot of fun. Before they left I bought a lot of art including button blankets... When the 'Ksan artists started to price themselves out of the market, 'Ksan lost its position as the leader of the commercial market very quickly. It is extremely doubtful that the school or their very few students will ever be competitive in Victoria and Vancouver. Within a few years of opening 'Ksan began to teach printmaking, and again they were initially the market leaders (David Wright interview June 22, 2002).

The success of the artists and the dance group in the 1970s was palpable, but at the art school they missed seeing the early signs of decline, 'Ksan the village was never fiscally stable, and over time, it became less so. Bill Ellis made some interesting observations when asked why 'Ksan declined so dramatically: "There is a lack of support within the administration of 'Ksan village, secondly in the gift store, there is almost nothing made by 'Ksan artists. The best advertising for 'Ksan is the products by 'Ksan graduates and students. So while our enthusiasm for 'Ksan has abated, the school has a problem, it is not keeping up" (Bill Ellis interview November 11, 2002).

Sargent's health was beginning to fail. She had been suffering from osteoporosis likely from the late 1950s, and by the mid-1980s her pain became so debilitating that she used a wheelchair. In my view, her health was critical to the future of 'Ksan. She turned over some of her duties at the village and the art school, but continued to be very active in the performance arts.²¹⁴ I believe she was very frustrated that her condition prevented her from working at her earlier pace of sixteen hours a day, seven days a week at no pay. Her correspondence at the time often expressed that frustration.

However, even though she was in a wheelchair, she could still get things accomplished: for example, in a letter to "Dolly" (no last name) she concludes with a plea: "Don't hesitate to phone if you have questions. Wheelchair-bound, I'm usually close to the phone, and love to talk about the dance group . . . they have done so well" ([RBCM] Polly Sargent's correspondence to Dolly, June 18, 1988). In a later letter to Pat (no last name), Polly touches on her mortality: "Since returning [from the hospital] Polly was committed 14-hour-writing days ... the Gitksan are afraid that Polly will be six feet under before the things they've taught her are in writing ... About all Polly will have to help with will be the scenarios (of a new dance project) ([RBCM] Polly Sargent's correspondence, January 13, 1989). Sargent here refers to herself in the third person. By drawing attention to herself I believe she was trying to reassure her business contacts that she was still in command. The usage of the third person always related to a task that she was asked to do or that she took on

²¹⁴ Sargent was still responsible for getting commissions for the creation of totem poles for many years.

herself. I also suggest that it was a statement for her own psyche. Despite her constant pain she devoted herself to 'Ksan. When her husband Bill died, she filled her loneliness with work. In 1987, Sargent won the British Columbia senior award for her volunteer work. Dave Parker, RPF, M.L.A. in a letter of congratulations to Sargent, summarized her contribution aptly: "[V]olunteer work in our communities often goes unrecognized although it is essential to the quality of life" ([RBCM] Parker correspondence November 25, 1987). 'Ksan certainly gave Sargent's life purpose. She continued to work as secretary for the dance group until her death in 1993.

In the early years, Sargent pushed hard for 'Ksan to get into multi-production (Neil Sterritt interview July 25, 2002), but it was not until the fall of 1985 that then village manager Ron Burleigh announced that 'Ksan was going to get into the "trinket" market. They would begin with model wood totem poles and ceramics, with 'Ksan being both retailer and wholesaler (Pat Michell, *Kahtou*, September-October, 1985, p. 10). Jewelry making was popular from the middle of the nineteenth century, when jewelry, especially silver bracelets, was given as potlatch gifts.

However, the initial efforts of making model totem poles were not successful. This change in emphasis was not the only change under Burleigh's management. In the early years, the school offered a wide array of courses, including the popular printmaking. The reason given in part was a downturn in the economy, which may or may not have caused a steep decline in the number of students (Vernon Stevens interview July 31, 2003). The reason seems legitimate, but when you go into the

retail sales outlets in Victoria or Vancouver, the biggest seller is jewelry, followed by prints. Dropping the product line that produces the most sales is not good policy. Some of the older graduates remarked to me that lack of interest in the school's products was partly caused by the lack of sales agents working for the school. This perhaps is the case. But most artists were independent businessmen and women; they did not rely on the school. Almost everyone I interviewed agreed that the greatest sales promoter (after the dance group) is a quality product. Clearly the quality of the art had declined by the middle of the 1980s, but most former students interviewed were reticent to lay specific blame. Hazelton, after all, is a very small community, and they have to live there. The major complaint most students made was that the school lacked competent leadership. But several people, independent of each other, also said that the art had lost its soul, its spirituality. By the turn of the twenty-first century, only a very few believed that the school would ever again be as good as it once was.

And, in fact, the school was not to be at all. In February 2010, the school closed. From the beginning, 'Ksan was a "joint undertaking of the 'Ksan Association and the federal and provincial government" (Cook, B. *The Province*, October 2, 1970, p. 3-4). Over the years, governments always came to the fiscal rescuer—until February 2010, that is. However, even if there had been money, there were no students. 'Ksan will go down as one of art history's more interesting art experiments, with an exciting beginning that saw Native art achieve the status of fine art.

CONCLUSION

Chief Douse from Kitwancool made a statement for the name of the museum, “Do not call it a museum. A museum is where you put objects of a dead culture. Our culture is not dead; let it be called the Skeena Treasure House.” In 1953, at a committee meeting (Week 1972:12), Chief Douse made this statement right after potlatch law was lifted in Canada (1951). When I read this statement, I felt his assertiveness, which reminded me of the following point by anthropologist Aaron Glass: “Instead of becoming passive recipients of an imposed and alien order, losing their identity and becoming subsumed by the dominant society (if they survived at all), Native people often became active participants who, over several hundred years, engaged (in), responded to, and negotiated with their colonizers” (Jonaitis and Glass 2010:8). He continued saying that “The sites and processes of such constructive as well as destructive interchange between indigenous people and settlers have become fascinating arenas” (Ibid.). Through my dissertation research I felt that finding this fascinating arena of Gitksan was the formation of ‘Ksan, and the voices of their survival.

Recent academic literature often discusses the notion of the “intercultural,” which “suggest the negotiated nature of colonial encounter and the variegated quality of its result” (Ibid.). The formation of ‘Ksan was truly the site of intercultural encounter, not the nature of colonialism in a historical sense. But before the ‘Ksan project, before the Gitksan community project was negotiated with Polly Sargent, Don Abbott, Bill Holm and Duane Pasco, as well as an intertribal encounter with Haida artist, Robert Davidson, Kwakwaka’wakw artists, Doug

Cranmer and Tony Hunt, and Tlingit artist/dancer, Nathan Jackson, they became “one.” One of the variegated quality of its results was “Ksan style,” which I believe was the outcome of intertribal or intercultural production.

The story of ‘Ksan makes an important contribution to Canadian and First Nations art history, even if its importance has not been fully recognized to date. How, then, did the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art go from instant success in 1970s to total inability to attract students resulting in its closure in February 2010, just forty-two years after it opened? This is the central question for further study. I can point to several themes or discussion points but first of all we should start with the basic premise that I established in chapter five, that there was mismanagement at the school. In my interview discussions, several interviewees pointed to mismanagement as the probable cause for the unsuccessful end of the school, but no one wanted to be quoted as to where the guilt might lie. As previously stated, Hazelton is a very small community, people have to live and get along with each other. Inflammatory comments, true or not, can kill a community. I interviewed the last director several times by telephone and two-hour face-to-face interviews. As required by the Human Research Ethnic Committee rules, at the end of my research, I sent transcripts of conversations to all those who I interviewed, which included a permission statement that would allow me to use the information contained in the transcripts. Much to my surprise he was completely reluctant to allow me to use the material unless I changed the tenor of his statements. I wrote him to try to ascertain the reasoning behind the refusal but he never responded. I note this particular difficulty that arose in my research to indicate the sensitivity

that is required to do this kind of scholarship. Any researcher doing further work on these topics would have to proceed with extreme care to honor the complex social dynamics of communities and individuals.

As my dissertation proves, the work of 'Ksan, the Kitanmax School, and the 'Ksan dancers is a critical chapter in the contemporary Canadian First Nations art history. There is no question that the 'Ksan troika was a milestone in First Nations art. We know that there was no word in the Native language for art but in the non-Native lexicon beginning in the late nineteenth century the words "Native art" began to be used. This dissertation goes into great detail on the misuse of the term "'Ksan style" to discuss and describe the variations of the centuries old formline design system.

The bastardization of the term "'Ksan style" by non-Native art historians threw many of us off, including myself. Initial work on the design style found on the Northwest Coast began with Franz Boas at the turn of the nineteenth century but it was not until 1965 that Bill Holm, after 68 years of research, was able to present his analysis of the forms found in Northwest Coast tribal art. His analysis is difficult to understand but his book *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* changed forever Northwest Coast art. The book was given to every student at 'Ksan. I hope that my contribution here adds a little to the different issues raised by scholars such as Boas and Holm.

Since my research on this dissertation focused on 'Ksan and the "'Ksan style," it was a revelation to me that no one really saw the connection between Holm's description of the formline and the 'Ksan style. An important future research

project would be to ascertain the state of the formline system of today's new Native artists, who have had little involvement with well-established and time-honoured traditions of the Northwest Coast. Artists are always moving in new and different directions, and the future of cultural renewal seems assured.

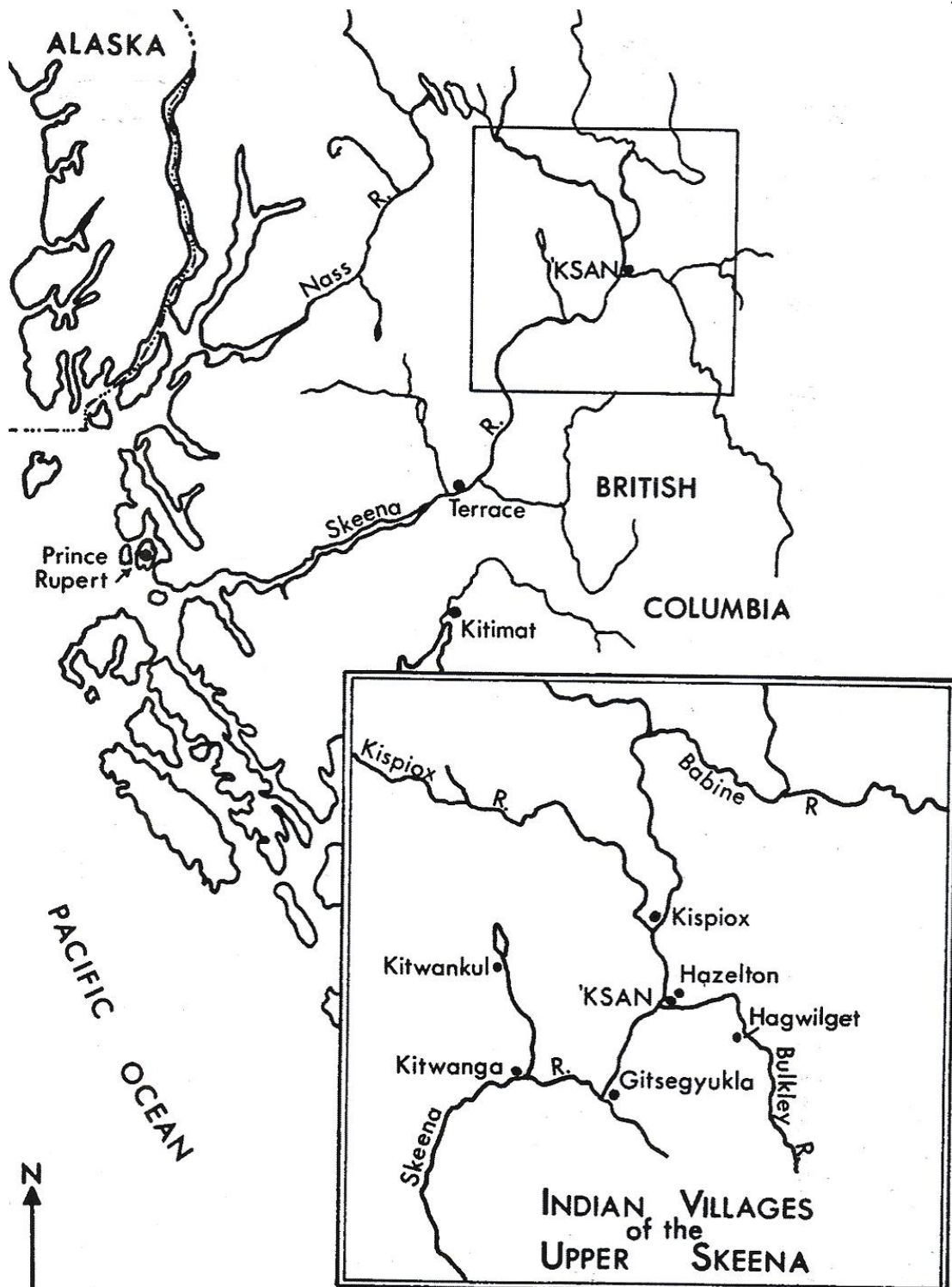


Figure 1. 'Hazelton, British Columbia.



Figure 2. 'Ksan Historical Village and Museum, Hazelton, B.C.



Figure 3. Totem Poles, of *Kitseukla* by Emily Carr, 1912. VAG 37.2.

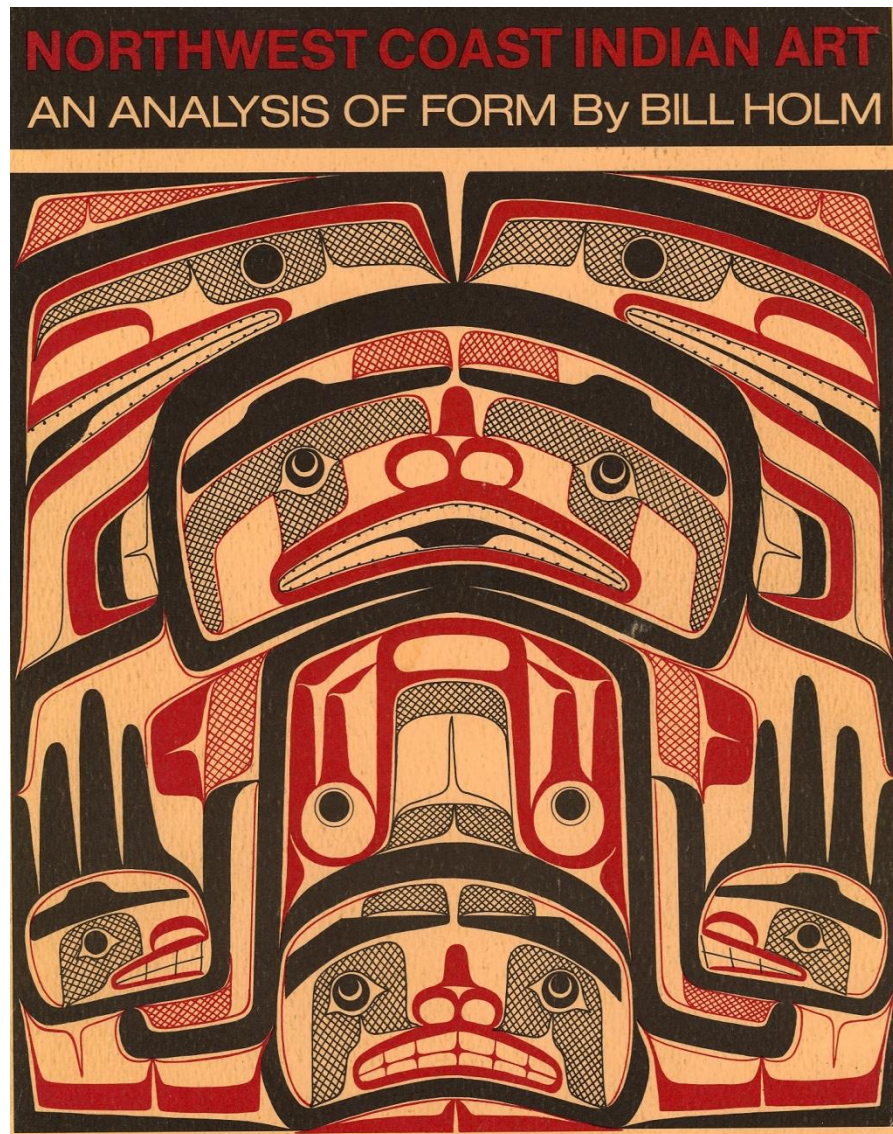


Figure 4. The cover of *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* by Bill Holm (1965)



Tsimshian (masks and frontlets)

Principle form - Half cylinder

Subordinate forms

Forehead slopes back from brow, front and side planes apparent.

Brow arched, narrow with rounded ends.

Eyesocket area large and open.

Orb large and smooth, more deeply set at bottom.

Eyelids carved, edges lack defining line.

Smooth dip between brow and bridge of nose.

Nose often with curved silhouette, somewhat aquiline.

Nostrils fairly wide, flaring.

Upper cheek, forecheek and cheek planes intersect in cheek pyramid.

Mouth wide, lips narrow.

Chin forward, short from top to bottom.

Main identifying characteristics

Open expression

Firm, "skeletal" structure.

Cheek pyramid.

Unlined eyelids.

Wide mouth, narrow lips.

Figure 5. The Form Characteristics of Humanoid Tsimshian (Masks and Frontlets) (after Bill Holm, n. d.).

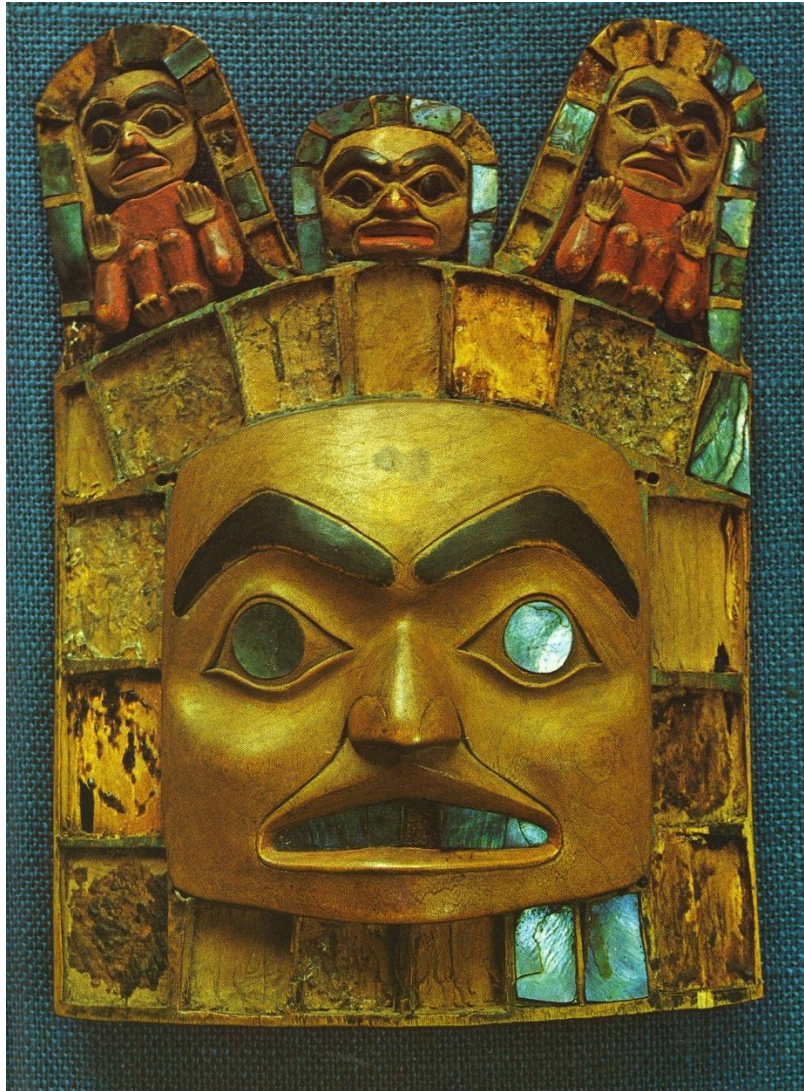


Figure 6. Tsimshian Frontlet.
Canadian Museum of Civilization, VII-B-10



Figure 7 Tsimshian mask (Moon). Before 1908.



Tsimshian (totem poles)

Similar to masks, but modified to fit cylinder of pole.

Exaggerated rounded orb.

Very wide, flattened nostrils.

Very wide mouth, pronounced cheek line.

Figure 8. The Form Characteristics of Humanoid Tsimshian (Totem Poles) (after Bill Holm, n. d.)



Figure 9. Close up of “Totem pole of Ksemxsam (Gitlardamks), 1927”.
Canadian Museum of Civilization. 69657.



Figure 10. Close up of “Totem pole of Ksemxsam (Gitlardamks), 1927. Canadian Museum of Civilization. 69657.



Figure 11. Dennis Wood's totem pole, 1927. Canadian Museum of Civilization. 69679.



Figure 12. Totem poles, Gitwinkul (Gitanyow), 1924 (left); close up of the pole. Canadian Museum of Civilization. 62413.

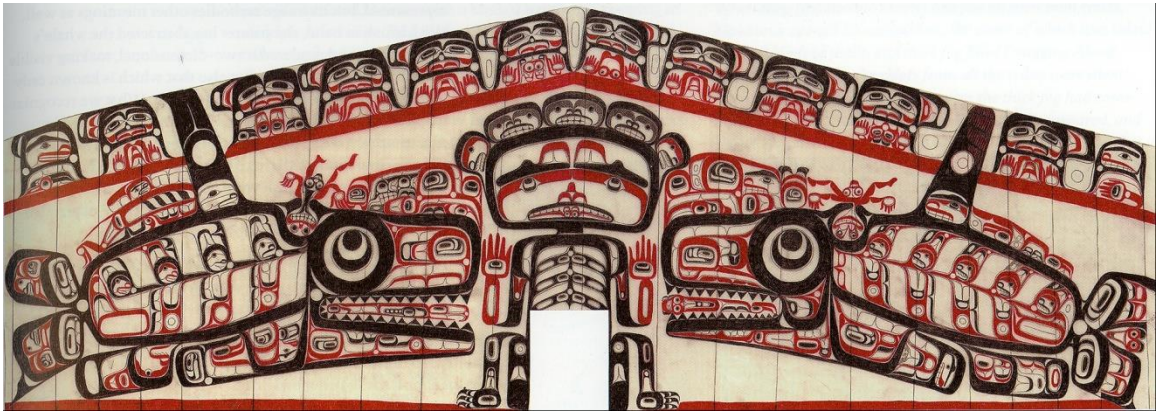


Figure 13. Rendition of painted house screen from Lax Kw'alaams, by Lyle Wilson 1992.



Figure 14. Postage stamp of Mount Hurd from a painting by Frederic Marlett Bell-Smith (1928).

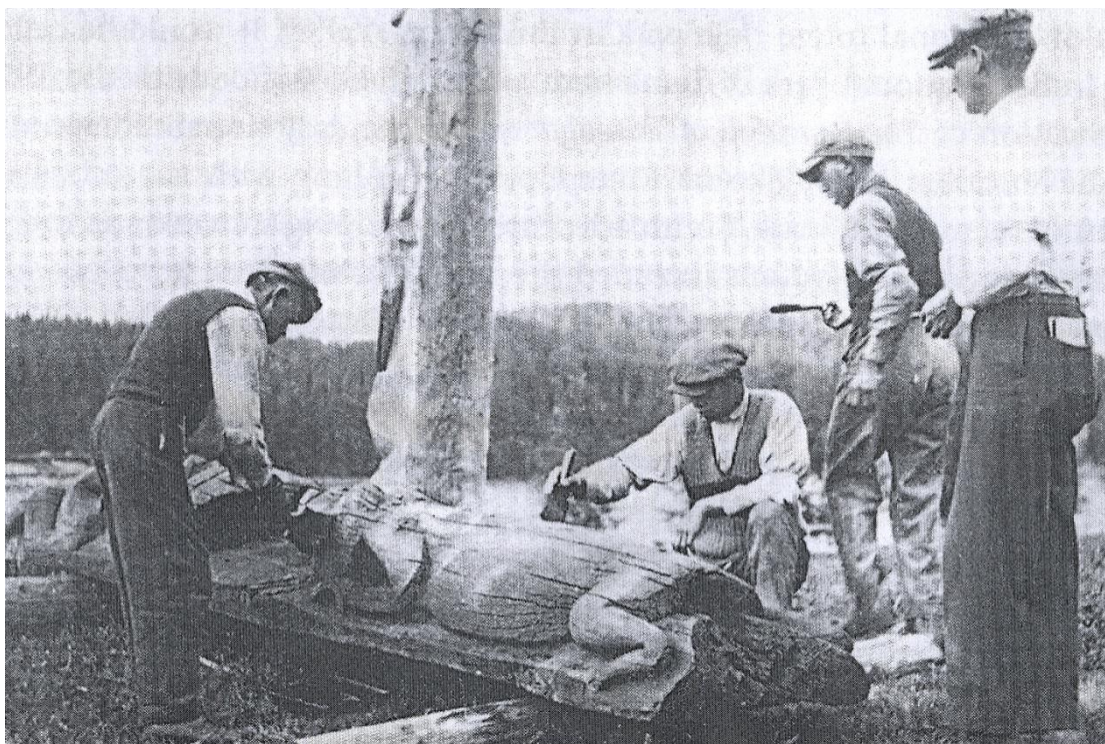


Figure 15. Field work of Harlan Smith; Oiling pole no. 4 with double Smith, 1925, Canadian Museum of Civilization. No. 65238.



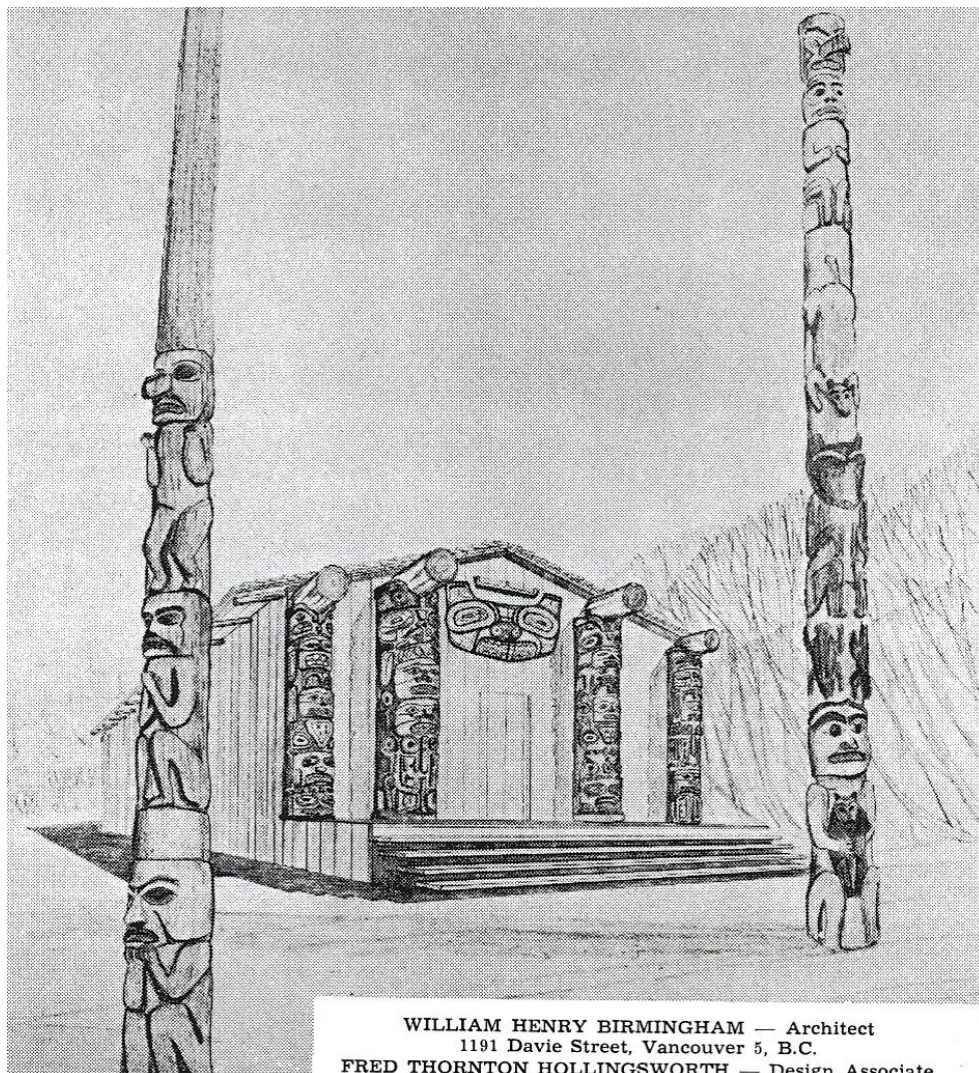
Figure 16. Kitselas village as restored by Marius Barbeau and Harlan I. Smith of the National Museum of Man. Canadian Museum of Civilization, photographer unknown, 1928, No. 76-3403.



Figure 17. Map of the Skeena Region, as dust jacket for Marius Barbeau, *The Downfall of Temlaham* 1928. Collection of Glenbow Museum Library & Archives. Photo: Ron Marsh.



Figure 18. Painting of *Kispayaks Village* by A. Y. Jackson, 1926-1927.
(Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 84.49)



Above is the "reconstruction" of an ancient Indian Ceremonial House which is to be built on the banks of the Skeena River through the joint efforts of the Hazelton Centennial Committee and the people of the Indian villages of the Upper Skeena.

- It is to be called the "Skeena Treasure House."
- In it, insured against fire and theft, the few remaining treasures of the Skeena are to be stored safely.
- Every effort will be made to duplicate the ancient way of doing things and what modernization is done will be done in the interests of fire protection and safety of the articles.
- This house is to be a monument to the artistic ability and the achievements of the People of the Skeena.

Figure 19. Design for the Skeena Treasure House.

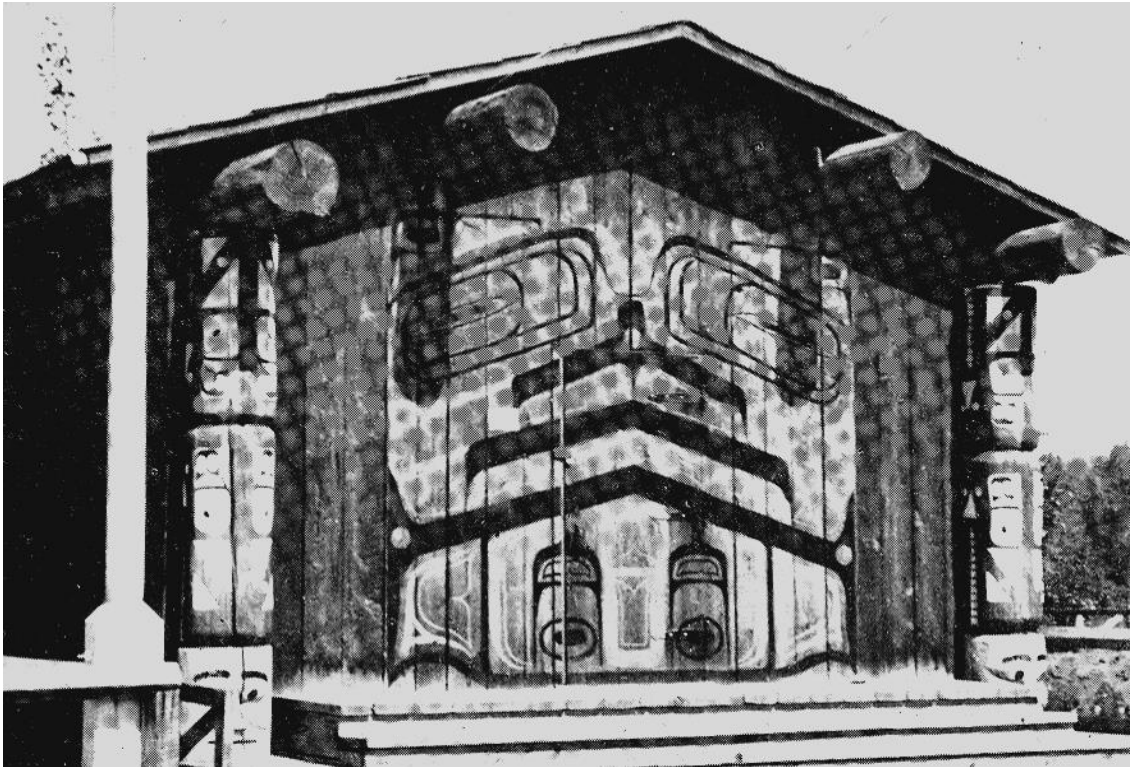


Figure 20. Skeena Treasure House, 1959.



Figure 21. British Columbia centennial silver dollar (1958)



Figure 22. "Hand of History"

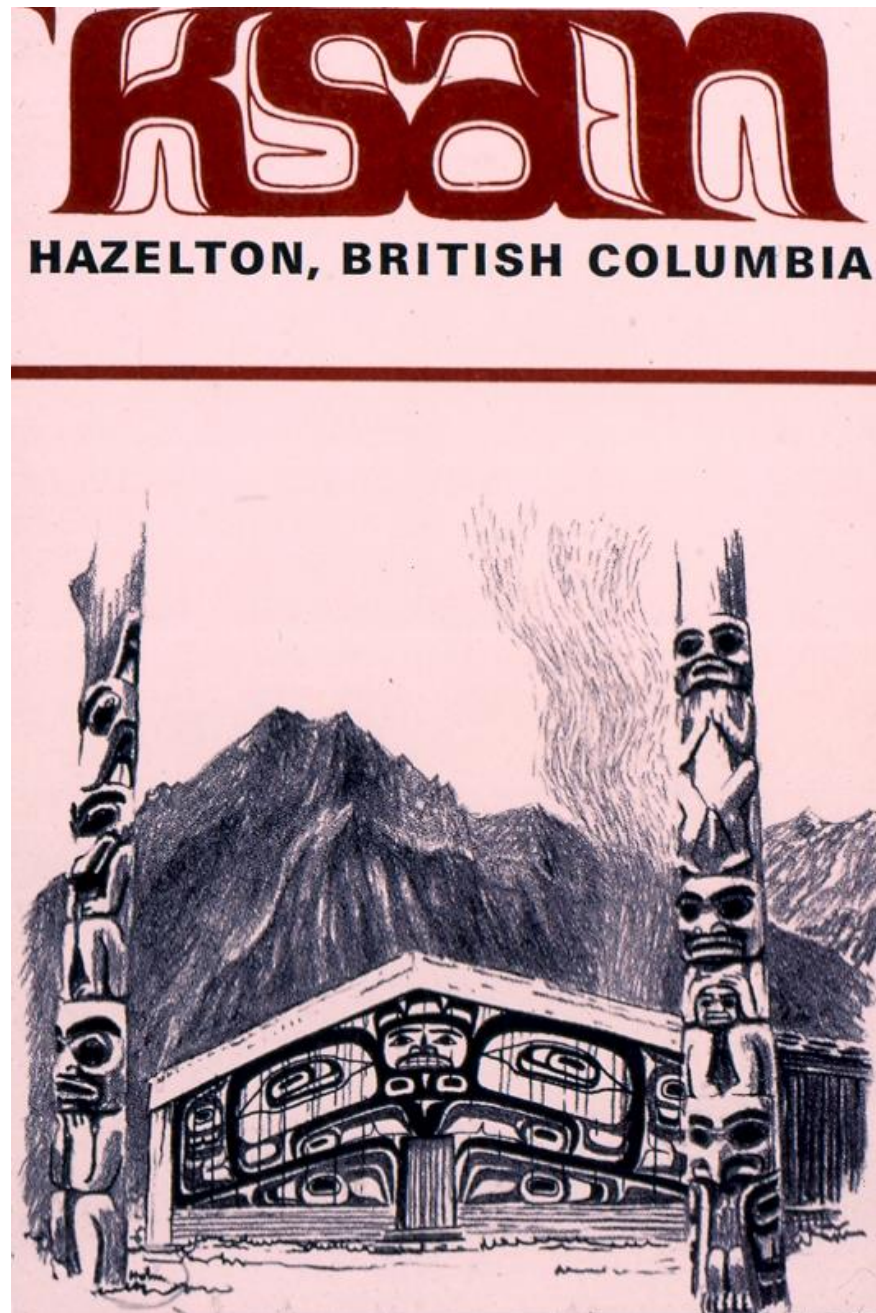


Figure 23. First 'Ksan brochure, designed by Bill Holm. c. 1960s.



Figure 24. Tsimshian chest by Vernon Stephens. 1974.
Royal British Columbia Museum, 14531.



Figure 25. Bent-corner Box. Haida, ca. 1870.
Seattle Art Museum, 91.1.63.



Figure 26. *We-gyet and the Swans* by Ken Mowatt (1977)



Figure 27. Premier W. A. C. Bennett and Cabinet Ministers Kiernan and Shelford join Gitksan Chiefs and Elders at the opening ceremony of the 'Ksan Village at Hazelton on August 12, 1970. (*The Smithers Interior News*, August 19, 1970)

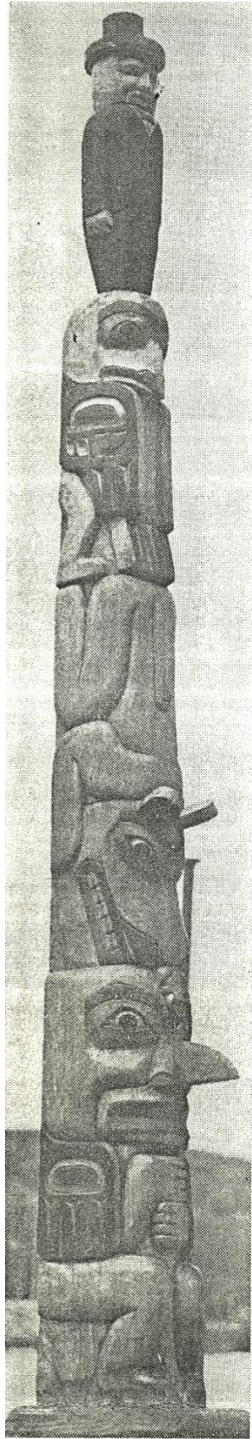


Figure 28. "Bennett" Totem Pole (*The Province*, August 19, 1970).



Figure 29. Polly Sargent and Premier W.A.C. Bennett at the 'Ksan opening in 1970. (*The Smithers Interior News*, August 19, 1970)



Figure 30. 'Ksan performers in Ottawa, 1972.
National Museum of Man (Canadian Museum of Civilization).



Figure 31. Three carved cedar murals by Ron Sebastian and Earl Muldon at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ottawa, Ontario in 1978.

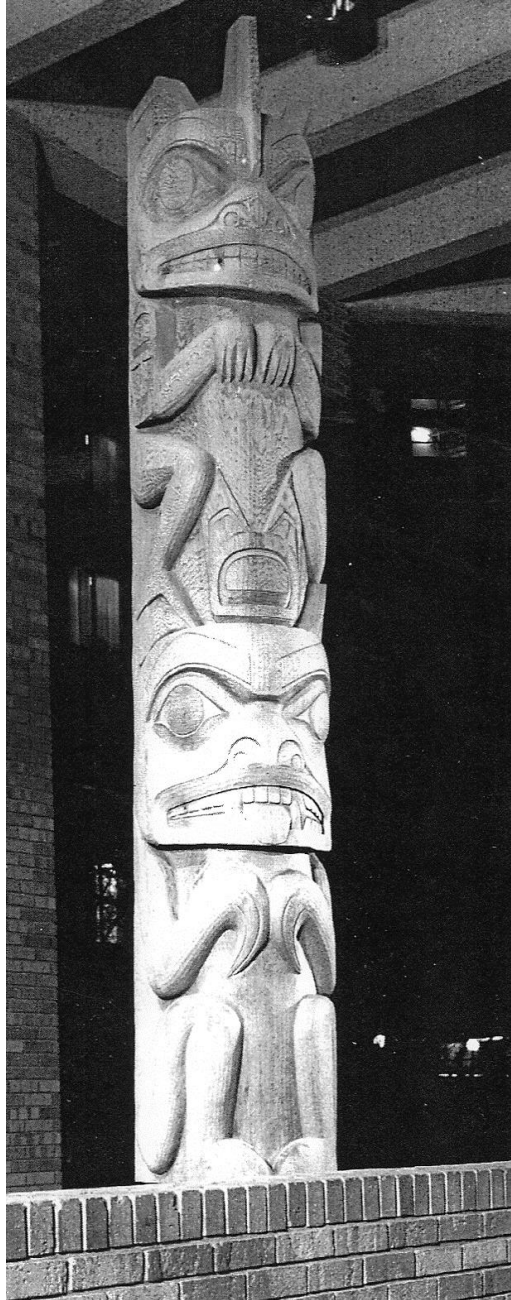


Figure 32. The Housepost by Walter Harris at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ottawa, Ontario in 1978.



Figure 33. Killerwhale by Walter Harris at the Commonwealth Room in House of Commons in Ottawa., 1981. Limestone.



Figure 34. Untitled by Earl Muldon at the House of Commons Entrance (East Wall) in Ottawa., 1981. Limestone.



Figure 35. *My Guardian Angel* by Roy Henry Vickers, 1977.



Figure 36. *First Annual Collection: 'Ksan 1978 Original Graphics*

'KSAN Artists

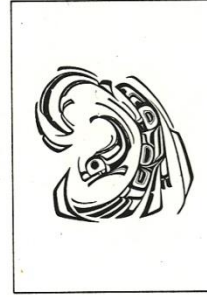
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Hilary Stewart Photo

Village of 'Ksan,
near Hazelton,
northern B.C., Canada

ALL OF THESE ART CARDS
ARE 6" x 9" (15 cm x 23 cm)

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Figure 37. 'Ksan Art Card Series. Canadian Native Prints Ltd.



Figure 38. *The Gitksan Dance of the Hummingbird Flight* by Vernon Stephens, 1975.



Figure 39. The Middle Plaza Totem Pole by Walter Harris and Art Sterritt, 1977 in Rochester, NY.



Figure 40. Back side of the Middle Plaza Totem Pole by Walter Harris and Art Sterritt, 1977 in Rochester, NY.



Figure 41. Totem Pole of Tsimshian, Canada by Earl Muldon and Phil Janze, 1988. Aichi, Japan.

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Appendix A

Memorandum:

Mr. Harkin

Re National Park at Hazelton,
British Columbia.

The petition from the residents of Hazelton asking that a National park and game preserve be established in the neighbourhood of Hazelton presents three main arguments why this locality is suitable for such a purpose. These are:

1. The presence of interesting Totem pole villages and sites connected with Indian history and legend in the vicinity.
2. The close proximity to the north of a natural big game and scenic area containing snow capped ranges and glaciers.
3. The rich scenic attractions and historical interest of Hazelton itself.

Each of the above calls for development along different lines and constitutes practically a separate proposition. The totem pole villages and Indian sites are not within the area suggested for a National park and are at some distance from each other. They could, therefore, only be treated individually as Historic sites, while the big game and scenic region to the north, between the Nass and the Skeena, would come under consideration as a National park area. The development of the tourist possibilities of Hazelton itself is more properly the concern of the Canadian National Railways although it is closely associated with and would follow as a natural result the creation of either Historic sites or a National Park Reserve in this locality. Of these the first is probably the more important.

Totem pole Villages and Indian Sites.

Hazelton, formerly the Indian village of Gitenmaks, forms the centre of a region which is among the most interesting from the point of view of Indian culture and legend

in all Canada. Within a radius of about twenty miles there are four villages, each possessing five poles and carvings, graveyards and other interesting remains.

At Hazelton itself, on a high ledge above the town there is a large and extremely interesting Indian cemetery, containing many curious grave houses in a style peculiar to this region and believed to be derived from Russian culture. In the town there are also four totem poles still standing beside an old Indian council house. Three miles away by a pleasant motor drive, which affords a wide view of the Skeena valley with Rocher de Boule to the south, is the impressive canyon of the Bulkley. Along the banks of the river at the foot of the canyon are Indian cabins, smoke houses and fishing platforms.

Directly opposite the canyon is the site of the present Indian village of Hagwelogate, home of "Mild People". This is a modern village and interesting chiefly on account of its historical associations and for the fact that it is the site of the grave of Beeny, the Indian prophet whose history is given by Mr. Barbeau on "Indian Days in the Rockies". The village, however, is well placed and would make a good site for Indian games, dances or story-telling. There are a few totem poles on the banks of the river below the canyon.

The road to the village crosses the canyon by a high suspension bridge and below, the Bulkley is seen boiling and foaming between outjutting perpendicular walls of rock that form natural gates on either side. The Indians fish along both sides of the canyon and it is an interesting sight to watch them using the picturesque traps and long handled curved spears. It is also a thrilling experience to an Easterner to watch the salmon righting their way up stream and leaping up the falls. There are five "runs" during the season. These be in early in July and last until September so that the salmon would be a tourist feature all the season.

Kispayaks.

About ten miles north of Hazelton, at the junction of the Skeena and Kispayaks rivers is the Indian village of Kispayaks. There are eighteen poles here well carved and in very good condition, some of which are painted in the old style. The old houses are for the most part in fair repair and could be restored. There are also two graverards where grave memorials from the oldest up to the most recent type maybe seen.

Kispayaks is reached by motor road and the drive is a very pleasant one, running through

thick woods with a view now and then of distant mountains, wild game of various kinds is said to be present in these woods although we saw nothing except grouse which were very thick and so tame that we were afraid at times they would be run over by the car.

Gitsegyukla.

The village of Gitsegyukla is about twelve miles west from Hazelton on the Skeena river. There is no road to the village but the site is less than a mile from Skeena Crossing, a flag station on the Canadian National Railway. This is a very interesting village built in a long line on the south shore of the Skeens. Most of the old houses are deserted, the Indians having removed to more modern dwellings higher up. There are eighteen poles standing here and one lying on the ground which might be restored. The carvings of these poles is very good and a few of them have been stained with native pigments. There is also a small house not far from the river containing the effigy of an Indian who shot himself some years ago. The figure is fully dressed with the face carved from wood and painted in a disturbingly like-like way. The old gun with which the Indian is supposed to have committed the deed is still in his hand. This building and effigy could easily be restored and although somewhat gruesome, would no doubt make an interesting object for tourists.

Kitwanga.

About ten miles further down the Skeens is Kitwanga, on the Canadian National Railway. Here there are about twenty poles, several of them in a bad state of repair and almost ready to fall. The carving appeared to be more grotesque and less simple and sincere than in the poles at Gitsegyukla and Kispayaks. There are a number of old smoke houses in a good state of repair where the Indians still cure the salmon and roe. These might be maintained as they are. On the river were observed a few dugout canoes. These are becoming very scarce and should be purchased and preserved. The grave of Kitwinkul Jim, about whom centres one of the most dramatic stories of the region, is also here, while the fortress of Tajawzep, where Nerht defended himself against his Nass enemies by rolling logs down upon them, is about two miles to the north.

Suggestions for Development.

From the point of view of this Branch the most important and pressing question with respect to Hazelton would seem to be the preservation of the totem poles. Now that Alert bay and other interesting villages on the coast have been dismantled there are a few places left along the line of travel where this art can be seen. It appears, on this account, important that immediate steps should be taken to preserve part if not all of the poles still untouched in the neighbourhood of Hazelton. In all there are 61 poles in the four villages distributed as follows:

Hazelton	4
Gitwanga	18
Kispayaks	19
Gitsegyukla	20

There are also, as has been said, a few poles still standing in the Bulkley canyon.

Most of these poles are in good condition but they are gradually being sold to museums and foreign collectors and the history of the last few years on the coast indicates that unless some action is taken it will only be a matter of a comparatively short time until these also disappear.

The poles are not only interesting as examples of primitive art but they play an important part in the rich mythical and historical traditions of the region. When removed from their associations with the village and the house of the family to which the traditions belong, they lose much of their interest and significance. It would (be) therefore appear very desirable to keep them where they stand and to take any steps possible toward preserving them from decay. Probably the first poles which should receive attention, owing to the fact that this is already a stopping place for tourists, are those at Gitwanga, although the poles at Kispayaks and Gitsegyukla are possibly better examples of the art.

The site of Tamlahan, which covers only a few acres, is at present occupied by a settler but it could probably be acquired for a small sum. This would be a very fitting place for a museum. Dr. Wrinch, the head of the hospital at Hazelton, who has one of the best collections of Indian curios in the west, has stated that he would be willing to loan the entire collection to the Government provided a museum were established. Such a

building might possibly take the form of one of the old Indian Council Houses, built in the ancient manner, of split cedar and with carved corner posts.

The grave of Beeny, the prophet of the Mild People, at Hagwelgate, should also be marked.

National Park and Game Preserve.

The petition also asks that an area between the Nass and the Skeena should be set aside as National park and Game preserve. It has not been possible to secure a great deal of information about this country but it would appear to be adapted for a recreational and Big Game preserve. Whether the scenic features are of sufficient importance to warrant its being set aside as a National park could only be ascertained upon examination.

Except for a narrow fringe along the rivers at each side the region is unsettled and much of it is unexplored and unknown except by the Indians who use it as a hunting ground. It was at one time very rich in game and would no doubt soon restock itself from the richer areas to the north. The district is said to be wild and mountainous including in the western part fine glacier hung peaks, some of which reach, from 7,000 to 9,000 feet. Access to the area could be had by the motor road up the old Telegraph trail which runs not far from what would be the eastern boundary. The Indians regard this as their hunting ground but if sympathetically approached, satisfactory arrangements could no doubt be made with them. If the British Columbia government were willing to transfer the land to the Dominion government probably all that would be required for some years would be to declare the area reserved and to establish an effective fire and game patrol. Hazelton would no doubt provide tourist accommodation and later bungalow camps might be established within the park itself.

As has been pointed out there is no scenic reservation west of Robson along the line of the Canadian National Railways and no place between Jasper and Prince Rupert which offers comfortable accommodation and sufficient attractions to induce tourists to stay over. This not only makes the journey tiresome but it deprives Canada of the additional money which tourists might leave behind. Every additional day they remain over means so much wealth added to the national prosperity.

Tourist Possibilities of Hazelton.

No one can visit Hazelton without realizing that it has many possibilities for development as a tourist resort. The town is situated on the Canadian National railway about 175 miles from Prince Rupert in a wide valley bottom at the point where the Bulkley river coming in from the east joins the Skeena. To the south rises the fine mountain known as Rocher de Boule, which dominates the landscape in every direction. Its rugged mass, varying from dawn to dark under changing light and passing cloud shadows, is an object of constant beauty and interest.

Few places in Canada have a more romantic and interesting historic background. Until the coming of the railway the Skeena was the great avenue of travel in this region between the Interior and the Coast. Flat bottomed side wheelers formerly carried food from Prince Rupert up the river as far as Hazelton and the voyage was always an adventurous one. The river is very swift, full of dangerous rapids and at Kitsalas canyon, in the old days it used to be necessary to warp the boat up-stream by means of cables fastened to windlasses on the shore. The Hudson's Bay post at Hazelton was one of the most important owned by the Company and formed the centre of many stirring encounters in early days. Hazelton too, saw the rush to the Ominica, the Skeena River Rebellion of 1872 and the gold rush of '98 to the Klondike. As late as 1911, according to G.T.Mallooh, of the Department of Mines, evidence of the sufferings and hardships endured by the gold seekers was to be seen along the trail in numbers of abandoned pack and riding saddles.

Through Hazelton also passed the Great Western Union Telegraph line, the proposed overland telegraph about the world. Construction of the line had reached about forty miles north of Hazelton when the word came in 1866 that the Atlantic cable was a success. Until a few years ago, coils of abandoned wire and kegs of nails were still to be seen along the trail.

Hazelton is now well known to sportsman as a big game and fishing centre. The country to the north, between Hazelton and the groundhog was formerly very rich in game, bear, caribou, moose, deer and mountain goat were all numerous. During recent years within twenty miles of Hazelton it has been practically depleted but there is still good hunting and farther north up the groundhog, game is said to abound. Good fishing

is to be had in the immediate vicinity of Hazelton while several lakes, such as Stewart and Babine that can be reached by trail are said to provide some of the best fishing in all Western Canada.

Indian History and Legends.

As Mr. Barbeau has shown in his report, the region is very rich in Indian legendary and historical interest as well as in cultural remains. Temlaham, less than a mile from the town, is the Gitksan Indian's Garden of Eden, the place where his mythology begins and about which many interesting stories centre. Mr. Barbeau has collected several hundred tales, many of which form the inspiration of the totem pole carvings or are associated with landmarks in the vicinity. The Indian graveyards at Hazelton and the other villages are extremely interesting with their curious grave houses, a form of memorial architecture said to be found nowhere else on this Continent, except the tribes of the Skeena and West Coast.

Directly opposite the site of Temlaham, there is an excellent site for a hotel on an eminence overlooking the Skeena valley with a small lake nearby. The Skeena river itself might be utilized for canoe trips. There are still Indians who know how to make and manage the river dugouts and a canoe trip down the rapids on the Skeena to Gitwanga, visiting Gitsegyukla on the way would be a thrilling and interesting experience. Among the tribes there may also still be found Indians who can relate the stories of the old days and campfire evenings might be arranged for the tourist where these old tales would be re-told. Some of these Indian story tellers tell their tales with surprising art, without crudity or coarseness, breaking off at times into plaintive native songs or dirges that form part of the relation. The Indian dances, with the traditional costumes and masks, might be also revived. The Skeena tribes have some stirring and beautiful songs and Indian singing in unison, to the accompaniment of the tom-tom, might be made a feature of an evening about the campfire.

As you know, these tribes also had a rich handicraft art, they manufactured beautifully carved rattles and masks, spoons, gold and silver bracelets, etc. They also wove the so-called "Chilkat blanket", one of the most complicated and highly developed products of native weaving on this Continent. While the Indian carvers and weavers are

rapidly disappearing, it might be possible, under sympathetic assistance to bring about a revival of some of these arts and the products could be sold to visiting tourists as souvenirs and so serve not only to add to the wealth and reputation of the country, but to build up a more satisfying life for the Indians themselves.

Climate.

The climate of Hazelton is pleasantly temperate with no excessive snow or rainfall. Small fruits, flowers, and vegetables grow in abundance and reach an exceptionally fine development. Vegetation is very thick in the lower valleys and there are many kinds of wild berries, huckleberries in particular being exceptionally fine. The trees are principally spruce, balsam, aspen and cottonwood, with some white birch, jackpine and a few big cedars. Owing to its northerly location the days are exceptionally long. Twilight in midsummer lasts until eleven o'clock, dawn breaking again a little after two and in the northern sky there is visible all night the Arctic bow or "false dawn", a sort of pale glow such as usually appears in the east as the herald of sunrise ([CMC] Marius Barbeau's Correspondence: Folder: Harkin, J.B., B202, f.22).

Appendix B

‘Ksan Historical Village & Museum Background

- 1940’s: Idea of a museum to house delicate and decomposing Gitksan artifacts emerges.
- 1950: Board of Trustees for Hazelton Public Library initiate plan for a museum- library.
- 1958: The Skeena Treasure House library and museum, a Centennial project, opened its doors on the banks of the Skeena River in Hazelton.
- 1960’s: Arising out of the interest and excitement of the Skeena Treasure House, the idea of a full-scale traditional Gitksan village was conceived.
- 1968: Skeena Treasure House Association becomes ‘Ksan Association.

The Federal Government Agricultural and Rural Development Act (ARDA) provides funding for ‘Ksan Indian Village and Museum.
- 1969: The Skeena Treasure House relocates to ‘Ksan site near junction of Bulkley Skeena rivers.
- 1970: ‘Ksan opens with six buildings: Carving Shed and Workshop, Studio, Sales shop, Fireweed House, Wolf House and Frog House.
- 1976: Northwestern National Exhibition Centre (NWNEC) opened, with contents of the former Skeena Treasure House now properly cared for in the museum portion of the Centre.

Appendix C

A Brief Description of The Buildings at ‘Ksan

- a) **Treasure Room (museum) and Exhibition Centre** - This building functions as a museum and an exhibition centre. The museum contains Gitksan and Wetsuweten objects collected from within a 50-mile radius of ‘Ksan. All are protected and displayed behind glass. Some Gitksan owners leave their regalia here for safekeeping, and retrieve it for ceremonial occasions.

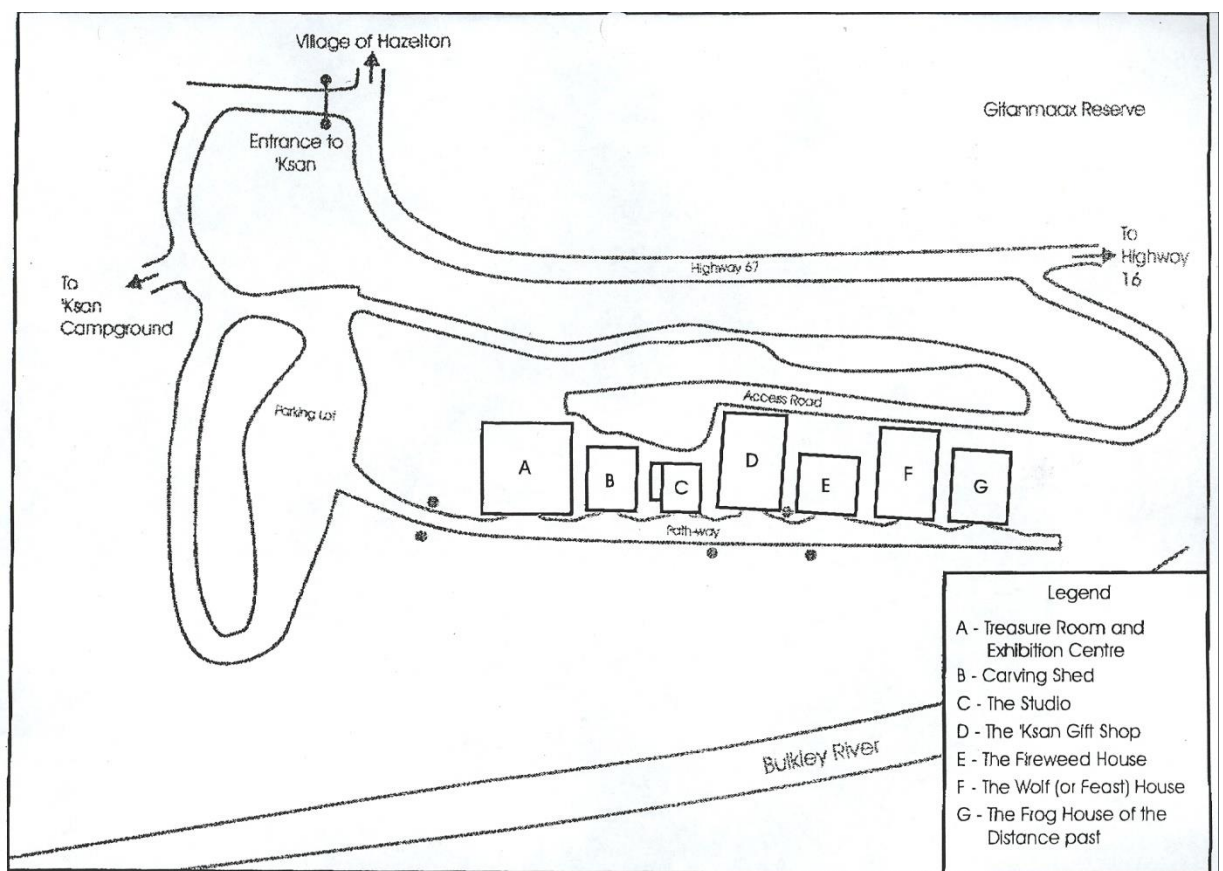
The Exhibition Centre is one of Canada’s twenty-three national exhibition centres. It was built under the National Exhibitions Centre criteria, which requires that ‘Ksan display a variety of exhibitions from around the world. This centre has provided an important cultural component for all of the Northwest, not just for the Hazelton. By doing so, it has attracted additional visitors to ‘Ksan.

- b) **Carving Shed** - This is the home of the unique Kitanmaax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art during the winter months. Here master Gitksan craftsmen train student artists in the old skills. It contains a variety of tools and machines. Tourists are sometimes allowed in to observe the artists at work (* Closed.)
- c) **The Studio** - This building is not open to the public. It is used mainly during winter months by the school. Gitksan artists work there to produce silkscreens, prints and cards. Part of the building is also used to store maintenance equipment and supplies. (* Closed.)
- d) **The ‘Ksan Gift Shop**. This is the sales outlet for arts and crafts. It contains the ‘Ksan office. Guided tours commence here.
- e) **The Fireweed House** - This building was the original museum, formerly named the Skeena Treasure House. It was originally located near the Skeena River at the present site of the Old Salts Fish and Chips restaurant.
- The display in this building is of contemporary masks and robes owned by the ‘Ksan Performing Arts Group.
- f) **The Wolf (or Feast) House** - This building is set out in the original style and format of a Gitksan house. For six weeks during the summer songs and dances by the ‘Ksan Performing Arts group are offered on Friday nights.
- g) **The Frog House of the Distance past** - This building and its contents strive to demonstrate pre-European ways of the Gitksan people. The displays demonstrate how the Gitksan adapted bone, stone, wood, tooth, bark, sinew and fur to their daily needs.

(Neil J. Sterritt, 2001)

Appendix D

Schematic of 'Ksan Complex



(Neil J. Sterritt, 2001)

Appendix E

Totem Poles of 'Ksan Historical Village

Entrance Poles (c.1968~1970) ['Ksan carvers]

Entrance Poles to the village: Located at the parking lot entrance, each pole carries figures of people and creatures found in Gitksan histories. At the top is Eagle, a clan of the area, followed by Frog whose hind legs form the ears of Hawk, a mythical bird having a sharply curved beak as well as a mouth with teeth. The next figure is that of a chief, holding a staff, and below him is Beaver, holding a chewing stick. Beavers cross-hatched tail is seen having a small face appear at the joint.

The Bear Mother (c.1968~1970) ['Ksan carvers]

This pole is topped by one of the brothers within the story of the Bear Mother, with his abducted woman peering over his knees. The next two figures represent the Bear Mother and her Bear Husband, and the design includes three small cubs instead of the traditional two. A small frog is seen peeking out beneath Bear's paws.

Dog Salmon Pole (1970) [Duane Pasco and 'Ksan carvers]

"Person with a fish spear" stands on the tail of a Dog Salmon. The salmon's tail emerges out of the person's head. "Slit-person" resides at the center point, holding onto the fin of a second Dog Salmon, with his head in the mouth of the first salmon. The Dog Salmon Pole, some 38 ft. in length, was erected about 1860 in memory of a Chief Tewalaas of the Eagle phratry of Gitwanga. The original pole is preserved in the National Museum of Man in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

The Meeting Place (c.1968~1970) ['Ksan carvers]

This pole was raised to commemorate the opening of the village on the 12th of August 1970. Standing at attention at the top of the pole is a white man, a B.C. Government representative, complete with top hat and bow tie. Beneath the man is Eagle and below is a crouched Wolf, representing the Wolf Clan. At the base is a crest of the dominant Fireweed Clan: Mosquito transforming into a human, wings becoming arms and human legs in development. A small Frog rest on Mosquito's forehead, a part of the legend.

Entrance Pole to the Wolf House (c.1968~1970) [Duane Pasco and 'Ksan carvers]

This represents the Wolf and Bear crests of the Wolf Clan. The top figure on the totem pole is not the most important; it is the figure on the bottom that carries the most weight.

The Two One-Figure Poles

Eagle – Roy H. Vickers, date c. 1970)

Human – Unknown carver, unknown date.